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The teaching and praxis concerning supernatural healing of British Pentecostals, John Wimber and Kenneth Hagin in the light of an analysis of the healing ministry of Jesus as recorded in the Gospels.

Warrington, Keith

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**The teaching and praxis
concerning supernatural healing of
British Pentecostals, of John Wimber and
Kenneth Hagin in the light of an analysis
of the healing ministry of Jesus as
recorded in the Gospels**

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Doctor of Philosophy

King's College, London

1999

Abstract

This thesis is concerned with the central issue of supernatural healing: namely, whether the healings of Jesus are a paradigm to be followed by Christian healers today; or whether the healings of Jesus are a unique phenomenon with specific pedagogical intent. The thesis proceeds by firstly describing and evaluating the beliefs and practices concerning supernatural healing of two major Classical Pentecostal denominations and two prominent individuals in the Charismatic tradition. Issues common to them all include a stress on the availability of divine healing partially resulting from the belief that the healing ministry of Jesus may be continued as a result of his healing authority having been delegated to believers.

Secondly, a literary analysis of representative healing narratives in the Gospels is provided in order to determine authorial intent for their inclusion. This process is extended to incorporate all the references to healing in the Gospels.

The latter research will provide a contextual grid for the examination of the beliefs and practices concerning healing of the denominations and individuals under examination. As a result of this exercise, it will be demonstrated that a pedagogical motivation may be identified as providing the substantial reason for the healing narratives being recorded by the Gospel writers. At the same time, the view that the healing ministry of Jesus may be replicated because his healing authority has been delegated to believers will be evaluated and critiqued. Adjunctive issues assumed to provide evidence for such views are also subjected to scrutiny.

As a result of this research, two main proposals are presented. Firstly, it is to be concluded that the healing ministry of Jesus has not been primarily recorded as a paradigm for healing praxis, to be emulated by believers. Secondly, the record of the healing narratives in the Gospels is best understood when pedagogical motivations are identified in the narratives and their literary contexts.

The teaching and praxis concerning supernatural healing of British Pentecostals, John Wimber and Kenneth Hagin in the light of an analysis of the healing ministry of Jesus as recorded in the Gospels

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ABBREVIATIONS

JOURNALS

| | |
|------|---|
| ACS | African Christian Studies |
| AER | African Ecclesiastical Review |
| AJBS | African Journal of Biblical Studies |
| AJET | African Journal of Evangelical Theology |
| BBR | Bulletin of Biblical Research |
| BibT | Bible Today |
| BIJS | Bulletin of the Institute of Jewish Studies |
| BR | Bible Review |
| BRT | Baptist Review of Theology |
| BS | Bibliotheca Sacra |
| BT | Bible Translator |
| BTB | Biblical Theology Bulletin |
| BVV | Believer's Voice of Victory |
| BZ | Biblische Zeitschrift |
| CBQ | Catholic Bible Quarterly |
| CBTJ | Calvary Baptist Theological Journal |
| CC | Christian Century |
| CL | Christian Life |
| CQ | Classical Quarterly |
| CRJ | Christian Research Journal |
| CT | Christianity Today |
| CTM | Currents in Theology and Mission |
| DR | Downside Review |
| EB | Epta Bulletin |
| EE | Elim Evangel |
| EJ | Evangelical Journal |
| ERT | Evangelical Review of Theology |
| ET | Expository Times |
| ETR | Etudes Theologiques et Religieuses |
| EQ | Evangelical Quarterly |
| FT | Faith and Thought |
| FV | Foi et Vie |
| GCG | Global Church Growth |
| GN | Good News |
| HBT | Horizons in Biblical Theology |
| HJ | Heythrop Journal |
| HOF | Herald of Faith |
| HTR | Harvard Theological Review |
| HUCA | Hebrew Union College Annual |
| HW | Healing and Wholeness |
| IBMR | International Bulletin of Missionary Research |
| IJP | International Journal of Psychiatry |
| ITQ | Irish Theological Quarterly |

| | |
|------|---|
| JAAR | Journal of the American Academy of Religion |
| JBL | Journal of Biblical Literature |
| JP | Journal of Psychohistory |
| JRH | Journal of Religion and Health |
| JSJ | Journal for the Study of Judaism |
| JSNT | Journal for the Study of the New Testament |
| LQHR | London Quarterly and Holborn Review |
| LV | Lumen Vitae |
| MAIR | Missiology: An International Review |
| MHR | Mennonite Herald Review |
| MD | Maison Dieu |
| NovT | Novum Testamentum |
| NRT | Nouvelle Revue Theologique |
| NTS | New Testament Studies |
| NTT | Nederlands Theologisch Tijdschrift |
| PP | Pastoral Psychology |
| PR | Pastoral Renewal |
| PRS | Perspectives in Religious Studies |
| RAC | Reallexicon fuer die Antike und Christentum |
| RB | Revue Biblique |
| RE | Review and Expositor |
| REJ | Revue des etudes juives |
| RJ | Reformed Journal |
| RT | Redemption Tidings |
| SH | Study Hour |
| SJT | Scottish Journal of Theology |
| SLJT | St. Luke's Journal of Theology |
| ST | Studia Theologica |
| SWC | Studies in World Christianity |
| SWJT | Southwestern Journal of Theology |
| TB | Tyndale Bulletin |
| TBB | The Burning Bush |
| TD | Theology Digest |
| TJ | Trinity Journal |
| TRJ | The Reformed Journal |
| VH | Voice of Healing |
| VML | Victory Miracle Living |
| VoxE | Vox Evangelica |
| WF | Word of Faith |
| WP | World Pentecost |
| ZAW | Zeitschrift fuer die Altestamentliche Wissenschaft |
| ZNTW | Zeitschrift fuer die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft |
| ZTK | Zeitschrift fuer Theologie und Kirche |

BOOKS

| | |
|--------|---|
| AG | A Greek English Lexicon of the NT and other Early Christian Literature |
| DJG | Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels |
| DPCM | Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements |
| LS | Greek-English Lexicon (Liddell and Scott) |
| MM | The Vocabulary of the Greek New Testament illustrated from the Papyri and other Non-Literary sources (Moulton and Milligan) |
| NDIEC | New Documents illustrating Early Christianity |
| NIDNTT | New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology |
| PGM | The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation |
| TDNT | Theological Dictionary of the New Testament |

ORGANISATIONS

| | |
|--------|--|
| CUP | Cambridge University Press |
| FB | Faith Builders |
| FLP | Faith Library Publications |
| GPH | Gospel Publishing House |
| HS | Hodder and Stoughton |
| KHM | Kenneth Hagin Ministries |
| KHFLAC | Kenneth Hagin Faith Living Audio Cassettes |
| MCWE | Morris Cerullo World Evangelism |
| VCF | Vineyard Christian Fellowship |
| VFI | Vineyard Fellowship International |
| VMI | Vineyard Ministries International |

Rationale

This thesis is concerned with the central issue of supernatural healing: namely, whether the healings of Jesus are a paradigm to be followed by Christian healers today; or whether the healings of Jesus are a unique phenomenon with specific pedagogical intent. The purpose of this thesis is to demonstrate that the healing ministry of Jesus was unique. Most Christians believe that Jesus undertook a supernatural healing ministry and that healings occur today. However, although a link with Jesus' healing ministry is assumed by some, the identity of any relationship is unclear. Some believe that Jesus the healer may be viewed as a model to be emulated by believers as a result of his delegating his healing authority to all his followers.

This thesis offers an alternative analysis of the healing ministry of Jesus that explains the dissimilarities between his healings and those achieved in other contexts whilst accommodating the possibility of contemporary divine healing; as a result, Jesus is viewed, not as a paradigm, but as an unique phenomenon, as far as healing authority is concerned.

An analysis of the views of some prominent representatives who believe that Jesus offers a healing paradigm will be undertaken. It will be concluded that their attempts to base their beliefs and praxis concerning healing on such a premise are unstable and unproven. Thereafter, an examination of the healings of Jesus in the Gospels will be completed to ascertain the purpose of their inclusion by the Gospel writers. Finally, an assessment of the healing

ministry of Jesus will be undertaken. As a result, the viability of a paradigmatic model apparently being based on the New Testament will be evaluated, such a view being critiqued. An alternative framework and understanding of the healing ministry of Jesus will be offered.

Methodology

The basic stance taken is of a Charismatic Christian from a Pentecostal background, having learnt from the strengths and developments within the latter tradition. The primary methodological approach has been that of literary analysis. If any critical methodology is to be harnessed in exploring the relevant New Testament texts, composition criticism, in which the text is analysed as we have it in its final composition, fits our purposes best.

The research has fundamentally been motivated by two source bases. Firstly, original materials of the representative groups and individuals studied have been consulted at length, secondary sources having significance mainly in the context of concurrence or where amendments to their conclusions have been offered. Secondly, the biblical text has been resourced, complemented by secondary sources, in order to determine the *raison d'être* of the healing narratives and to establish whether Jesus' healings were paradigmatic or uniquely phenomenological.

Significance

The significance of this project and its unique contribution to scholarship is as follows:-

1. It is the first time that the healing beliefs and praxis of British Pentecostalism have been comprehensively researched and analysed. In particular, the basic premise, often perpetuated that Jesus anticipated he was to be emulated in his healing ministry by believers is critiqued.
2. The latter nuanced critique is also uniquely levelled at the work of Kenneth Hagin and John Wimber whilst establishing their failure to support their own belief systems in this regard.
3. Although major reasons for Jesus' healing ministry have been offered by others in limited analyses of texts in the Gospels, this research provides the first analysis of all the healing narratives concerning Jesus resulting in a hermeneutical framework for all such miracles to be recognised as catalysts for teaching.
4. Finally, and as an adjunct to the latter points, an assessment is provided of the belief that Jesus acted as a paradigm with regard to healing, concluding with the alternative view that his person and healing ministry were uniquely phenomenological and therefore unrepeatable.

Introduction

There is an increasing awareness of divine healing in the Church as well as in secular society.¹ However, there have been problems associated with the promulgation of such a belief. Pattison² writes, "We find ourselves in a situation where there is enormous interest and concern concerning...healing... amongst Christians...but this is not in any way matched by appropriate theological assessment and critical evaluation". It would be presumptuously ambitious to assume that divine healing may be adequately explained, given that it, by definition, originates with God who is, at source, mysterious. Smail³ deduces, "Healing is a messy mystery that defies attempts to define it". Nevertheless, an acknowledgement of mystery is no reason for an absence of careful enquiry.

It is appropriate in a discussion relating to divine healing to revisit the life and ministry of Jesus. The healings of Jesus will be examined in order to determine whether he intended to be an example for his followers to emulate with regard to healing or whether he is to be recognised as an exceptional healer whose healings cannot be considered without a simultaneous recognition of his unique person, message and ministry. Such uniqueness

¹ Morrow, L., "How to believe in miracles", Time, (Dec. 30, 1991) 57f; Wallis, C., "Faith and Healing", (57f), Kaplan, M., "Ambushed by Spirituality", (57f), Biema, D.V., "Emperor of the Soul", (30f) Time, (June 24, 1997).

² Pattison, S., Alive and Kicking, London: SCM (1989) 1; cf. Dixon, L.E., "Have the 'Jewels of the Church' been found again?", EJ, 5.2 (1987) 7-92; Brown, C., "The Other Half of the Gospel?", CT, 33 (21 April 1989) 26-29.

³ Smail, T., "A Quest for a Christian theology of healing", doctoral seminar, Kings College, London (1993).

illustrates the difficulty of assuming a paradigmatic element in his ministry. Instead, it will be demonstrated that the healing ministry of Jesus is not paradigmatic but pedagogical. It will thus be proposed that although the miracles of healing have value in themselves as far as the relief of suffering is concerned, for Jesus and the Gospel writers, they act as catalysts of learning; vehicles of instruction; opportunities to learn about Jesus and springboards for potential development for his followers. In this regard, it is fully acknowledged that the believer may learn from all the elements of the life and ministry of Jesus, including his healing activity, though it will be demonstrated that the healing ministry of Jesus is unique. Although principles may be identified that may be imitated by his followers, including compassion, sensitivity and love, other aspects of his healing activity indicate that he is functioning uniquely, his healing mission undergirding his Messianic function and redemptive purposes. Although one may learn from his manner of healing, as from the rest of his life, it will be contended that his healing ministry may not be replicated, given the unique reasons offered by the authors for the inclusion of the healing narratives.

Issues relating to authenticity⁴ of the various pericopes have not been discussed as they do not pertain to the project, the major object of which is to

⁴ These issues have been dealt with by others with varying results:- Blackburn (B.L., "The Miracles of Jesus", in Studying the Historical Jesus, (eds.) Chilton, B., Evans, C.A., Leiden:Brill (1994) 353-394) explores the historical debate; Bultmann (R. The History of the Synoptic Tradition, New York:Harper and Row (1963)), Dibelius (M., From Tradition to Gospel, (transl.) Woolf, B.L., New York:Scribner (n.d.) 91-102) and Meier (J.P., A Marginal Jew, Garden City:Doubleday (1991) 220ff) pursue a policy of demythologization based on form critical methodology that results in the miracles being assumed to be the

discuss how and why the authors have used the material before them. Critical evaluations of the healings of Jesus which lead to their rejection as being inauthentic, pre-scientific explanations of psychosomatic problems or psychologically induced ailments are similarly not explored for they are not related to the subject of the thesis.⁵ Sanford⁶ has sought to explain the healings of Jesus in terms of psychotherapy, though this, at times, results in forced interpretations of the text.

product of the later Christian community and unrelated to the activity of the historical Jesus; Fossum (J., "Understanding Jesus' miracles", BR, 10 (Feb. 1994) 18), examining the theological import of the healings, assumes this necessitates inauthenticity; Smith (M., Jesus the Magician, San Francisco: Harper and Row (1978)), while accepting the possibility of the occurrence of miracles in the ministry of Jesus, sees them as proof of his being a magician akin to other magicians of the time; Mussner (F., The Miracles of Jesus, (transl. Wimmer, A.) Shannon:Ecclesia Press (1970) 18-39, 55-65, 81-87), Huffman (D.S., "The Historical Jesus of Ancient Belief", JETS, 40.4 (1997) 551-562) and Loader (W.R.G., "The Historical Jesus Puzzle", Colloquium, 29.2 (1997) 131-150) defend their historicity as does Kee (H.C., Medicine, Miracle and Magic in New Testament Times, Cambridge:CUP (1986) 75-79) who views the miracles as historical proof of Jesus' prophetic status; Vermes (G., Jesus the Jew, New York:MacMillan (1973) 20-26, 58-82) also describes the healings as fitting into the contextual framework of first century Jewish experience and belief.

⁵ cf. Davies, S., Jesus the Healer, London:SCM (1995) 69ff; Gniska, J., Jesus of Nazareth, Peabody:Hendrickson (1997) 120f; Keller (E. & M., Miracles in Dispute, Philadelphia:Fortress Press (1968) 227-239) rejects the historicity of the healing miracles of Jesus and, without interacting with them, assumes they are to be interpreted as the actions of Jesus which assumed miraculous forms but were intended to show that with God, difficult situations can be overcome; Horsley (R.A., Jesus and the Spiral of Violence, San Francisco:Harper and Row (1987) 181ff) and Crossan (J.D., The Historical Jesus. The Life of a Mediterranean Peasant, Edinburgh:T. & T. Clark (1991) 303-332)) view the miracles as intended to act as catalysts of freedom from social, religious and economic privations of the first century.

⁶ Sanford, J.A., Healing Body and Soul, Leominster:Gracewing (1992) 28f; cf. Calestro, K.M., "Psychotherapy, Faith Healing and Suggestion", IJP, 10.2 (1972) 83-113; Applebaum, S., "Psychoanalytic Therapy: A Subset of Healing", Psychotherapy, 25.2 (1988) 202; Galipeau, S.A., Transforming Body and Soul. Therapeutic Wisdom in the Gospel Healing Stories, New York:Paulist Press (1990) 53-73, 90-102, 111-130; Hankoff, L.D., "Religious Healing in First Century Christianity", JP, 19.4 (Spring 1992) 387-407.

More important will be a quest to determine the significance of the healings in relation to Jesus and to provide a hermeneutical grid in order to understand their significance in the context of his mission. Healing miracles were an important element in Jesus' ministry as was his preaching though they did not exist in isolation from one another for the former were manifestations of the latter.⁷ Indeed, the healings are often preceded (and concluded) with references to his teaching.⁸

The view that Jesus intended only to heal people is to be dismissed as naive. Instead, it will be demonstrated that a hermeneutical model needs to be appropriated in order to understand more clearly the reason for the healing ministry of Jesus.⁹ The healings function as paraenetic phenomena, not methodological paradigms.¹⁰

-
- ⁷ Matt. 10:7f; Mk. 6:12f; Lk. 9:1; 10:9; cf. Marshall, I.H., The Gospel of Luke. A Commentary on the Greek Text, Exeter:Paternoster Press (1978) 198; Wilkinson, J., Health and Healing, Edinburgh:Handsel Press (1980) 39; Richards, J., (ed.) The Church's Healing Ministry, Basingstoke:Marshall Pickering (1986) 14; Borobio, D., "An Inquiry into Healing Anointing in the Early Church", Concilium, (April 1991) 38; Go, P.K-S., "Healing Ministry in Kingdom Perspective", unpubl. M.Th., Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena (1993) 47; Menzies, R. P., "A Pentecostal Perspective on 'Signs and Wonders'", Pneuma, 17.2 (1995) 271f; contra Fuller, R.H., Interpreting the Miracles, London:SCM (1963) 82.
- ⁸ Matt. 9:14-35; Mk. 1: 21-28//s; 2:23-3:5; 7:14-29; Lk. 5:12-16; 6:6-10, 20-7:17.
- ⁹ cf. Harper, M., The Healings of Jesus, London:HS (1986) 68; Pilch, J.J., "Understanding Biblical healing: Selecting an appropriate model", BTB, 18 (1988) 66.
- ¹⁰ cf. Rohde, J., Rediscovering the Teaching of the Evangelists, Philadelphia: Westminster (1968) 113-152; Perrin, N., What is Redaction Criticism?, Philadelphia:Fortress Press (1969) 3-67; Kingsbury, J.D., "Observations on the 'Miracle Chapters' of Matthew 8-9", CBQ, 40 (1978) 559-573; Blomberg, C.L., "Your faith has made you whole", Jesus of Nazareth Lord and Christ, (eds.) Green, J.B., Turner, M., Grand Rapids:Eerdmans (1994) 84.

Similarly, Richardson¹¹ states the miracle stories are not to be “regarded as simple events devoid of theological interpretation” but living parables of the teaching of Jesus imparting theological lessons. Derrett¹² describes the author of Luke as one who “litters his stories with clues, which we must cherish if we are to follow him”. The purpose of this thesis is to substantiate and develop these claims and to do so comprehensively by examining all the healings of Jesus recorded in the Gospels.

The conclusions will have significant impact on much modern healing praxis and teaching which views the ministry of Jesus as paradigmatic for it will be demonstrated that the healings were provided as pointers to the person of Jesus with attendant consequences rather than models to be emulated. They are presented by the Gospel writers as narrational vehicles to emphasise important aspects relating to Jesus and the lifestyle of those who would be his

¹¹ Richardson, A., The Miracle-Stories of the Gospels, London: SCM (1941) 102 (34ff); cf. Grant, R.M., Miracle and Natural Law in Graeco-Roman and Early Christian Thought, Amsterdam: North Holland Publ. Co. (1952) 269; Kallas, J., The Significance of the Synoptic Miracles, London: SPCK (1961) 2; Held, H.J., “Matthew as Interpreter of Miracle Stories”, Tradition and Interpretation in Matthew, (eds.) Bornkamm, G., Barth, G., Held, H.J., Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark (1963) 246f, 299; Robbins, V.K., Jesus the Teacher, Philadelphia: Fortress Press (1984) 66; Blomberg, C.L., “The Miracles as Parables”, The Miracles of Jesus, Wenham, D., Blomberg, C.L., (eds.) Sheffield: JSOT (1986) 347; Uth, D.F., “An Eschatological Interpretation of the Synoptic Miracles in the Mission and Message of Jesus”, unpubl. Ph.D., Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary (1991) 5; Kahl, W., New Testament Miracle Stories in their Religious-Historical Setting, Gottingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht (1994) 6ff; Schnackenburg, R., Jesus in the Gospels, (transl.) Dean, O.C., Louisville: Westminster (1995) 312.

¹² Derrett, J.D.M., “Positive Perspectives on two Lucan Miracles”, DR, 104 (1986) 272; cf. Slusser, D.M., “The healing narratives in Mark”, CC, 87.19 (1970) 597-599.

followers.¹³ The authority of Jesus will be expressed with regard to the Law (especially Sabbath law), in his ability to forgive sins, in his readiness to designate the outcast as a recipient of God's mercy, in his initiation of the Kingdom of God and in his application of Old Testament prophecy to himself. The lessons for his followers relate mainly to the importance of faith and obedience as integral elements of discipleship. Allied to the above features is the fact that the healings of Jesus function as moments of decision; they offer opportunities for the hearers of Jesus to commence their walk towards him, to have that decision affirmed or to reject him.

The research will be subdivided into four sections:

A. **Jesus the healer as a paradigmatic model for healing praxis**

One twentieth century healing movement and two individuals in the Charismatic healing tradition are to be examined. They claim to base their teachings and praxis on the healing ministry of Jesus, resulting in a belief that his healing mission is to be accepted as a healing model to be emulated by believers. Their respective beliefs will be analysed and critiqued.

- (1) A critical, historical evaluation of the teaching and praxis concerning divine healing within British Pentecostalism will be

¹³ cf. Remus, H., Jesus the Healer, Cambridge: CUP (1997) 16-30.

presented, with consideration being given to the two largest denominations that have dominated Classical Pentecostalism in Britain during the twentieth century, the Elim Pentecostal Church (Elim) and the Assemblies of God (AOG). These groups have been chosen because they have, since their inception, consistently emphasised the role of divine healing, despite considerable early opposition.

- (2) A critique of the teaching and methodology of Kenneth Hagin as they relate to healing will be undertaken. He has been chosen for this exercise as the representative of the Word of Faith Movement, a world wide influence on the Church, with its particular emphasis on the capacity of believers to follow the example of Jesus in his healing ministry.
- (3) A critique of the views and praxis of John Wimber concerning healing will be undertaken. He was a major influence on British Classical Pentecostalism, as well as other denominations, with his particular emphasis on Signs and Wonders, Power Evangelism and a unique methodological approach to divine healing. He also anticipated the possibility of emulating the healing ministry of Jesus.

Together, the above examinations provide insight into different but important sectors in the Church today which exist with a desire to see occurrences of divine healing.

B. **Jesus the healer as a model for pedagogical purposes**

- (1) Five passages have been chosen from the Gospels for particular analysis. The motivation is to determine whether it is possible to trace significant reasons for the presentation of the accounts by the respective Gospel authors that demonstrate that their inclusion has been more than simply to record that Jesus was a healer, a supernatural healer or a better healer than others of his day.
- (2) Thereafter, each of the healing stories in the Gospels will be examined to determine motifs that are integral to the accounts. It will be argued that to overlook such motifs will obviate an accurate perception of the purposes of the healing accounts as presented by the respective authors. To identify such purposes contextualises the healing narratives correctly as paraenetic material rather than proofs of power.

C. **The commissions of Jesus and the role of the Spirit**

The above two issues will be briefly analysed as they have significant bearing on the views expressed by the denominations and individuals concerned regarding the apparently delegated healing authority of Jesus to believers.

D. **An assessment of Jesus as a paradigmatic or pedagogical model**

An assessment will be provided of the healing praxis of the denominations and individuals concerned in the context of the following analysis of the healing narratives in the Gospels and the adjunctive issues explored in the latter section. Resulting from this, it will be concluded that a model for healing may not be demonstrated as existing in the ministry of Jesus and that the dissimilarities between his healing praxis and that of contemporary believers is too significant as to allow the possibility that it may be emulated. Instead, its importance as pedagogical information concerning the person and ministry of Jesus will be highlighted.

JESUS THE HEALER AS A PARADIGMATIC

MODEL

The role of Jesus in the healing praxis and teaching of British Pentecostalism

Introduction

Classical Pentecostalism, as a world-wide phenomenon, has, since its inception, believed in the possibility of divine healing as a legitimate expression of the ministry of the Church, entrusted to it by Christ and mediated through the power of the Holy Spirit.¹⁴ Indeed, Dayton¹⁵ contends in his survey of the rise of the Healing Movements that, "Pentecostalism ... understood itself to be restoring a lost concern of the Early Church" while

¹⁴ cf. Martin, R.F., "Gifts of Healing", DPCM, 350ff; Harrell, D.E. Jr., All things are Possible: The Healing and Charismatic Revivals in Modern America, Bloomington:Indiana University Press (1975); Dayton, D., "The Rise of the Evangelical Healing Movement in Nineteenth Century America", Pneuma, 4.1 (Spring 1982) 1-18; Chappell, P.G., "Healing Movements", (DPCM), (eds.) Burgess, S.M., McGee, G.B., Grand Rapids:Zondervan (1988) 353-374; Blumhofer, E.L., The Assemblies of God. A Chapter in the story of American Pentecostalism Vol. 1-to 1941, Springfield:GPH (1989) 26-36; Goff, J.R., "Questions of Health and Wealth", Pentecostals from the inside out, (ed.) Smith, H.B., Wheaton:Victor (1990) 65-70.

¹⁵ Dayton, D.W., Theological Roots of Pentecostalism, Peabody:Hendrickson (1987) 115.

Poloma¹⁶ describes it as one of the major reasons for the growth of Pentecostalism. The Assemblies of God in an official positional paper notes that it is "an integral part of the Gospel".¹⁷ This emphasis is particularly noticeable in British Pentecostalism.¹⁸

However, the occurrence of healings is no guarantee for the internal coherence or consistency of Pentecostal teaching concerning such an issue. In a major Classical Pentecostal monthly magazine, it was recently suggested that "God often protects them (believers) from becoming ill in the first place" oblivious to the inability of proving such an assertion.¹⁹ Smith²⁰ writes, "Not coincidental to the rise of Pentecostalism was the decline of healing theology among mainstream evangelicals. The excess of disreputable Pentecostals forced most to stay away from any emphasis on healing within their circles". As will be demonstrated, there has been, in recent years, an increasing

¹⁶ Poloma, M.M., "An Empirical Study of Perceptions of Healing among Assemblies of God members", Pneuma, 7.1 (Spring 1985) 61.

¹⁷ AOG, "Our position on Divine Healing", Paraclete, 9.2 (1975) 7-13; cf. Johns, C.B., "Healing and Deliverance: A Pentecostal Perspective", Pentecostal Movements as an Ecumenical Challenge, (eds.) Moltmann, J., Kuschel, K-J., London:SCM (1996) 45.

¹⁸ See the Fundamental Beliefs of The Assemblies of God (AOG); The Elim Pentecostal Church (Elim); The Church of God of Prophecy; The New Testament Church of God (NTCG); The Apostolic Church; Tee, A., Healing and Health, London:Evangel Press (n.d.) 6ff; Elim Lay Preachers Handbook, London:Elim (1946); Gee, D., "Wide interest in Divine Healing", VH, (Feb. 1953) 20; Richards, J., "The Healing Ministry and Charismatic Renewal", Strange Gifts, (eds.) Martin, D., Mullen, P., Oxford:Blackwell (1984) 154; Mercy, P., "Ministering Healing", Redemption (June 1990) 5ff; Taylor, M., "A Historical Perspective on the Doctrine of Divine Healing", EB, 14 (1995) 54-84.

¹⁹ Wiseowl, Direction, (April 1998) 8.

²⁰ Smith, H.B., (ed.) Pentecostals from the inside out, Wheaton:Victor (1990) 67.

readiness to develop a theology of healing by some Pentecostals that is analytical and critical of excesses and errors.

The belief in divine healing has rested on Old Testament²¹ and New Testament texts,²² reinforced by occurrences of healings throughout the history of Pentecostalism.²³

²¹ Ex. 15:26; Ps. 103:2f, 105:37; Is. 53:4f; Mal. 3:6; cf. Carter, J., Questions and Answers on Vital Subjects, Nottingham: AOG Publishing House (n.d.) 9f; Squire, F.H., The Healing Power of Christ, Southend: Full Gospel Publishing House (1935) 13-19; Horton, H., "Rapha at Golgotha", EE, (July 29, 1961) 472ff; Wright, G., Our Quest for Healing, Cheltenham: Grenehurst Press (1981) 49-51; Cove (G., God's Covenant of Divine Healing, Nelson: Coulton's (n.d.) 9), deducing that what was good enough for the Israelites under the Old Covenant is good enough for us under the New suggests, "We may claim...that we may not die prematurely before the age of seventy".

²² Matt. 4:23; 8:16f; 10:8; Mk. 16:15ff; Lk. 9:1f; Jn. 14:12; Acts 10:38; Heb. 13:8; Jas. 5:14f; 1 Pet. 2:24; cf. Wright, Our Quest..., 51-58; Squire, The Healing..., 13-19; Linford, A., Pentecostal Pictures, London: Peniel Press (1976) 121-129.

²³ Parker, P.G., Divine Healing, Clapham: Victory Press (n.d.) 9-15; Burton, W.F.P., Where to go with your troubles, Preston: Congo Evangelistic Mission (n.d.) 45-50; Lockyer, H., The Healer and Healing Movements, (n.d. n.p.); Burton, W.P.F., Missionary Pioneering in Congo Forests, Preston: R. Seed & Sons (1992); Jeffreys, G., Miraculous Healing after Twenty years suffering, London: Elim (1927), Helpless Cripple perfectly healed at Leeds, Clapham: Elim (1927), A Modern Miracle of Healing at Grimsby, Clapham: Elim (1927); Boulton, E.C.W., George Jeffreys. A Ministry of the Miraculous, Clapham: Elim (1928) 180ff; Adams, A., Stephen Jeffreys, London: Covenant Publ. Co. (1928) 44ff; Jeffreys, G., The Miraculous Foursquare Gospel, Clapham: Elim (1929) 22ff; Healing Rays, Clapham: Elim (1932) 176-209; Darragh, R.E., In Defence of His Word, Clapham: Elim (1932) 15-140; Jeffreys, E., Present Day Miracles of Divine Healing, Birmingham: Bethel Press (1933); Hill, J.C., Jesus never fails, Hull: Gledhill (1933); Kingston, C.J.E., Fulness of Power, Clapham: Victory Press (1939) 51-57; Coates, C., The Miraculous Healing of Miss Florence Munday, Birmingham: P.H. Hulbert (1945); Barrie, R., "The Gifts of Healing", SH, (Sept. 15, 1948) 176f; Burton, W.F.P., Signs Following, Luton: AOG (1949) 1-8, 16-24; Turnbull, T.N., What God hath wrought, Bradford: Puritan Press (1959) 140-146; Allen, W., "Divine Healing", EE, (July 16, 1966) 450; Richards, W.T.H., Pentecost is Dynamite, London: Lakeland (1972) 65; Missen, A.F., The Sound of a Going, Nottingham: AOG (1973) 5, 22; Whittaker, C.C., Seven Pentecostal Pioneers, Basingstoke: Marshalls (1983) 35, 59-76; Banks, M., Healing Secrets, Basingstoke: Marshall Pickering (1986) 36-46; Canty, G., The Practice of Pentecost, Basingstoke: Marshall Pickering (1987) 2ff; Edsor, A.W.,

The possibility of divine healing is not in dispute. That which is to be determined relates to whether a model of healing, based on the praxis of Jesus, may be emulated by believers.

Jesus the paradigmatic healer

Many Pentecostals affirm that the healing authority of Jesus has been delegated to the Church. Undergirding this belief is the assumption that Jesus acted as a paradigm for believers with regard to healing.²⁴ A number of reasons may be adduced for these beliefs. These reasons are drawn from the writings of mainstream Pentecostal sources although they have been, at times,

Set your House in Order, Chichester: New Wine Press (1989) 57-65; Bridges, J.K., "The Miracles of Jesus", WP, 54 (1997) 8; examples of testimonies of healings (many occurring during evangelistic missions) are recorded in EE: - Jan. 21, 28 (with an anointed cloth), Mar. 18, Apr. 22, May 6, 13, June 10, July 15, 22, Aug. 19, Sept. 9, 23, Oct. 14, 28, Nov. 4, 11, Dec. 9, 1961; June 9, Sept. 22, 1962; Jan. 19, June 22, Aug. 10, Sept. 14, Oct. 5, 26, 1963; Mar. 14, Apr. 4, May 2, Dec. 12, 1964; Mar. 13, Aug. 7, Sept. 25, Dec. 18, 1965; Feb. 26, Apr. 2, May 14, July 16, Sept. 17, 24, 1966; April 20, May 11, Aug. 17, 1968; Feb. 15, Apr. 5, 19, May 10, July 5, Aug. 9, Oct. 25; June 6, Oct. 24, 1970; Feb. 16, 1985; Feb. 8, June 14, Nov. 8, 1986; June 27, Oct. 3, 1987; RT: - July 18, 1952; Feb. 27, 1953; Jan. 18, Feb. 8, May 17, June 26, Aug. 16, 1979; Jan. 24, Feb. 28, Apr. 17, May 15, Sept. 18, Oct. 30, Dec. 11, 18, 1980; Jan. 15, May 28, June 25, Oct. 8, 1981; May 13, June 24, Aug. 5, Sept. 16, 30, Oct. 28, Nov. 25, Dec. 30, 1982; July 21, 1983; Feb. 9, 1984; Aug. 15, 1985; Redemption: - July, Aug., Sept., Oct., 1993; Direction: - Apr., June, Aug., 1990; Mar., 1994; Feb., May, Sept., Nov., 1995; Joy: - Jan., Feb., March, April, May, June (3 resurrections reported in the UK), July, 1995.

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This is not the only reason offered by Pentecostals for healing being a valid ministry of the Church today. Although it is the major reason, others include the acknowledgement of the charismatic gifts of healings referred to in 1 Cor. 12:9, the guidelines offered in Jas. 5:13-18 and the significant numbers of healings that have occurred during the history of Pentecostalism. Similarly, Jeffreys (Healing Rays, 99-110) notes the fact that healings have continued through the era of the Church as a result of the work of the Spirit. However, it has been concentrated on in this thesis because in the literature available, it forms the most popular reason for the expectation of divine healing.

critiqued from within Pentecostalism. It is to be remembered that the importance of the advocates of various beliefs differs markedly at times, as does the merit of their views; nevertheless, in this examination of popular Pentecostal beliefs concerning healing, each author contributes something of value to the flow of the debate, the less erudite writers, at times, reflecting the majority viewpoint. The significance of the following reasons is that they provide a hermeneutical context for relating the healing ministry of Jesus to believers today. They are as follows:-

Jesus healed all who came to him; he has not changed

As a result of this motif, it has been assumed by many that since Jesus healed all who came to him for restoration and since his healing ministry has apparently not changed, it is to be expected that it will continue throughout all eras with the same measure of constancy and success. In this respect, he is viewed as a paradigm, his achievements potentially being replicated through the life of the believer. Thus, Hoover²⁵ indicates that Jesus' "programme (of divine healing) is the same today for He is unchangeable." Yet he, with others, fails to notice the differences between the ministry of Jesus and that of his followers.

Though it is not to be doubted that divine healings do continue to be experienced in the Church, as anticipated by Jesus in John 14:12, the central

²⁵ Hoover, J.N., "Divine Healing", EE., (Feb., 5, 1945) 45.

issue relates to whether Jesus intended his healing ministry to be the paradigm for other healing ministries in the future. It will be argued that he did not; furthermore, it will be contended that his healing ministry was specifically related to his incarnational mode and ministry of revealing his identity and salvific purposes to mankind, the healings being a central element in this process.

Jeffreys,²⁶ the founder of Elim, states, "Our Lord who healed in the days of His flesh is declared to be the unchanging one (Heb. 13:8)". This belief that since Jesus has not changed, he can heal now as he did when on earth, permeates Pentecostalism, it being affirmed in the seventieth anniversary magazine of Elim.²⁷ Popular beliefs concerning the hope of divine healing, based in the healing ministry of Jesus, are located in the hymn and chorus books used by Pentecostals.²⁸ These musical sources have been a significant element in the promulgation of important beliefs within Pentecostal churches. The Hymnal Committee that chose the hymns for the Redemption Hymnal, a popular hymnbook up until recent years, stated, "Existing hymnbooks contain an inadequate selection of hymns...this collection has been to supply that which was lacking", songs that were to include those relating to "divine healing for the body".²⁹ Almost all the latter have been retained in the New Redemption

²⁶ Jeffreys, The Miraculous..., 36ff.

²⁷ Green, D., (ed.) Celebration, Worthing:Elim (1985) 29.

²⁸ Elim Choruses, (Books 1-18) Eastbourne:Victory Press (first printed in one volume, 1966); Redemption Songs, London:Pickering and Inglis (n.d.).

²⁹ Redemption Hymnal, Eastbourne:Elim Publishing House (1951) v. All hymns below are taken from the Redemption Hymnal unless otherwise specified.

Hymnal,³⁰ a hymnbook compiled by a committee of Leaders from Elim, AOG and Apostolic churches.

Old Testament and New Testament verses promising healing were employed to introduce the hymns.³¹ Important issues felt to be integral to divine healing were stressed. Thus, that Jesus healed³² and that he healed all³³ who came to him were facts reflected in the popular songs and understood to be of fundamental importance to the issue of healing. Other aspects were included, namely that Jesus healed out of compassion,³⁴ the relationship between healing and the death of Jesus³⁵ as a result of which healing was presented as a promise to be claimed³⁶ or a right to be enjoyed.³⁷ Remaining ill but maintaining patience was believed to be unnecessary for the believer.³⁸ The healing ministry of Jesus acted as proof that similar miracles were to be expected in all eras. However, many other songs express the fact that the Lord constantly supports the believer through difficult times without removing

³⁰ New Redemption Hymnal, Milton Keynes: Word (1986).

³¹ Ex. 15:26 (730); Ps. 107:20 (737); Matt. 8: 16 (732); 9:21 (731); Mk. 1:32, Acts 10:38 (733); Jam. 5:16 (736).

³² Redemption..., 731, 732, 733, 734, 735; Elim..., 47, 104, 136, 155, 332, 513, 623; Redemption Songs, 385.

³³ Redemption..., 730

³⁴ Redemption..., 730... “Is our Lord, the good, the kind, the tender, less loving now than in those days of old?”.

³⁵ Redemption..., 735... “From Thy stripes and wounds may pour a cleansing, healing flow”, “sin and sickness” being part “of the curse” (737); Elim..., 136.

³⁶ Redemption..., 736; Elim..., 21, 23, 104, 214, 216, 447, 464, 487, 499, 505, 515, 541, 755.

³⁷ Redemption..., 734, 735; Redemption Songs, 335.

³⁸ Redemption..., 730... “Why not ask it now instead of praying for ‘patience’ to endure”.

the suffering³⁹ while terms associated with physical healing are used to describe forgiveness or spiritual deficiencies.⁴⁰

Parsons⁴¹ writes, with uncertain logic, "If it were not God's will for his children always to be healed of their sicknesses, one would have expected Jesus to be sick sometimes as an example to us of the virtue of being sick". More particularly, this view reflects again the belief that Jesus is the paradigm for believers today with regard to healing. It does not entertain the possibility that Jesus' healings were signs to accompany the inbreaking of the Kingdom of God or catalysts for teaching. Indeed, Canty⁴² rejects the possibility that Jesus confirmed important issues through the miracles, viewing such a theory as unacceptable. Instead, he maintains, "He heals because He loves us", though does not explain why, if love is the reason for healing, all he loves are not all healed.⁴³

Throughout the history of Pentecostalism, there have been those who state that it is always God's will to heal,⁴⁴ Carter⁴⁵ following a common line by

³⁹ Redemption..., 428, 430, 440, 444, 453, 454, 458, 460, 466, 474; Elim..., 82, 84, 102, 144, 212, 278, 321, 327, 490, 497, 710, 763, 802, 891; Redemption Songs, 371, 373, 398, 401, 740.

⁴⁰ Redemption Songs, 291, 349, 426, 428, 618, 648, 652.

⁴¹ Parsons, P., "It is God's will to heal", Bread, 21 (Sept.-Oct., 1982) 7.

⁴² Canty, G., "Heal the Sick", What Pentecostals Believe, (ed.) Wright, G., unpublished draft (1980/1981) 29f.

⁴³ contra Jeffreys (Healing Rays, 97f) who accepts the premise that Jesus' healings were achieved for more purposes than simply to restore people physically.

⁴⁴ Cove, G., How to build a strong faith for Divine Healing, (n.d. n.p.) 4f; Banks, M., Divine Health is for you, (n.d. n.p.) 5; Squire, The Healing..., 28f; Montgomery, C.J., The Prayer of Faith, London: Victory Press (1930) 4f, 27, 40f, 66, 72; Barrie, R., "The Gifts of Healing", EE, (Oct. 15, 1948) 190; Horton, H., The Gifts of the Spirit, Glendale: Church Press (1949) 110; Cove, G., How to

pointing to the fact that "Jesus healed all who came to him." From this assertion, it has been deduced that the desire of Jesus remains constant through all eras and his response to those who come for healing is the same as when he was on earth, his authority to heal being channelled through believers in his absence. Canty⁴⁶ thus contends, "It is impossible to square Christ's incessant warfare against sickness with the theory that sickness is God's will". Thus, at times, the ministry of healing takes place in a verbal context of claiming or commanding healing, in assumed agreement with the procedure of Jesus.⁴⁷

However, throughout the Pentecostal era, there have been others who have reacted to the simplistic suggestion that because Jesus healed all who came to

make your healing permanent, Sandbach:Wrights (1956) 17; Sawyer, H., "According to your faith", EE, (Oct. 2, 1965) 631; Allen, "Divine...", (Aug. 13, 1966) 516, (Aug. 20, 1966) 530; Murray, A., "Pardon and Healing", EE, (April 13, 1968) 226; Chant, K., "Who said divine healing is not for today?", EE, (Mar. 1, 1969) 145; Wright, G., "The Miracle that inspires hope", EE, (May 10, 1969) 314; Darragh, In Defence..., 104; Hoy, A.L., "Gifts of Healings", Paraclete, 12.1 (1978) 10; Hicklin, R., "Divine Healing", RT, (Mar. 18, 1982) 5; Andrews, I., "Authority to Heal", Bread, 21 (Sept.-Oct., 1982) 4f; Canty, G., "Belief for Believing", RT, (July 21, 1983) 10; K.M. Simons in a letter to Redemption (Aug. 1986, 41) expresses "amazement at a remark...in Redemption that suggested that healing might not be the will of God for all".

⁴⁵ Carter, Questions..., 9f.

⁴⁶ Canty, G., "Man has a built in Health Service", RT, (Sept. 18, 1980) 8f; cf. Cove, G., Why some are healed by Christ and some are not, Nelson:Coulton (n.d.) 37; Canty, G., "Positively negative", EE, (Jan. 27, 1962) 51; contra Cartwright, D., "Neglected Factors", EE, (Mar. 31, 1962) 195f; Hicklin (R., "Divine Healing (3). The First Principle", RT, (Jan. 21, 1982) 5) writes, "The prayer for healing which adds the words 'thy will be done' not only frustrates faith...it speaks blasphemy" (Cove died of a heart deficiency while Hicklin died of cancer (I am grateful to Des Cartwright for this information)).

⁴⁷ cf. Osteen, J., "Changing your destiny", Bread 7 (May-June, 1980) 7; Banks, M., Healing Revolution, Basingstoke:Marshalls (1985) 54, 85, 138, 148.

him for healing, the same is available today. Thus Jeffreys⁴⁸ notes that distinctions may be drawn between the pattern of divine healing as recorded in the Old Testament and the Gospels with that described in the early Church, writing, "It pleased God to introduce new features into the dispensation of the Holy Ghost that were not to be found in the others". The issue of the conditional nature of divine healing is one of the areas that has experienced a noticeable change within Pentecostalism though tension still remains. Some have suggested that although God has the power to heal, he does not always choose to heal and in the case of the latter, it is due to his sovereign will.⁴⁹ Woodford⁵⁰ concludes, "The healing ministry of Jesus was conditioned and exercised within the terms of His divine commission, always in obedience to the commandment of the Father and thus within the sphere of His sovereign will".

⁴⁸ Healing Rays, 101.

⁴⁹ Parker (Divine..., 24) records, "When our Lord first of all commenced to give out His gifts of healing, all who came to Him received...But the time came for the plan to be modified...From general giving the plan became discriminate giving"; cf. Horton, H., "More about 'gifts'", SH, (Mar. 15, 1950) 46; Gee, D., The Pentecostal Movement, London: Victory Press (1942) 164; "What is Confidence?", VH, (April 1954) 25; Brewster, P.S., The Spreading Flame of Pentecost, London: Elim Publishing House (1970) 45; Hollenweger, W.J., The Pentecostals, London: SCM (1972) 357; Wiseowl, Direction, (Jan. 1996) 29.

⁵⁰ Woodford, L.F.W., The Doctrine and Practice of Divine Healing and Deliverance, A Paper presented to the British Pentecostal Fellowship, London (1960) 2. He notes the fact that Jesus' "healing ministry did not reach out to the Samaritans or the Gentiles except in one or two special instances (Matt. 10:5, 15:24)"; Hathaway (A., "The matter of healing", EE, (Mar. 30, 1963) 194) adds, "Extravagant claims concerning divine healing are not supported by a greater percentage of success, while the premature deaths of some of God's choicest saints, including some of our own ministers, even after incessant prayer, must surely temper the claims that are made. Claims must be supported by exegesis and evidence. Neither supports claims to universal healing".

The official Statements of Faith of the Classical Pentecostal denominations offer the hope and potential of divine healing but refrain from expressing it as a guarantee. The Statement of Fundamental Truths of Elim was revised in 1993/4 as a result of which the stated beliefs concerning healing underwent amendments. The words, "laying on of hands and anointing the sick with oil" which were included with the ordinances of baptism by immersion and the observance of the Lord's Supper have been removed. Also, the wording which states that "All who walk in obedience to His will can claim Divine Healing for their bodies", which was included from 1928, has been removed in recognition that this is not reflected in the New Testament.⁵¹

Tee⁵² states, "In the matter of divine healing we must always remember that God is sovereign and can do exactly as He wants". Gee⁵³ notes, "We have erred by refusing any place in our doctrine or at least a very insufficient place for the sovereign will of God". Similarly, he⁵⁴ remarks, "To ask for Divine healing without any accompanying 'nevertheless, not my will but Thine be done' seems to pose an attitude out of keeping with every other right attitude

⁵¹ An earlier amendment to the 1927 Constitution removed the statement concerning healing being in the atonement and "the privilege of all who believe". From 1927, healing was regarded as being available to all who walked "in obedience to his will".

⁵² Tee, A., "The Doctrine of Divine Healing", Pentecostal Doctrine, (ed.) Brewster, P.S., Cheltenham:Grenehurst Press (1976) 198; cf. Richards, letter, RT, (Oct. 23, 1953); Taylor, "A Historical...", 72, 82-84; Dye, C., Healing Authority, London:HS (1997) 93f.

⁵³ Gee, D., Trophimus, I left sick. Our Problem of divine healing, Clapham:Elim (1952) 37.

⁵⁴ *ibid*, 27f; cf. Parker (Divine..., 8) is open to the possibility that God could guide a Christian not to seek for their healing "as He told Paul".

we take in prayer". Phillips⁵⁵ describes the purpose of prayer as being "co-operation with God in bringing about His will...not trying to persuade God to carry out our will".

There has been a significant development in perception concerning healing which is the result of a major paradigm shift in theological understanding and a recognition that although the Kingdom has been established by Jesus, not all its benefits may be experienced in this life. Experience and a re-examination of Biblical principles concerning healing have been the major causes of this development. However, it also demonstrates a distinction between much modern healing praxis and that of Jesus for there is no record of his refusing any request for healing.

However, for some, the recognition of Jesus' healing ministry is too pronounced in Pentecostal tradition to accommodate a view that does not anticipate its continuation amongst believers today to the same degree as that which was present in first century Palestine. Consequently, there has been a reticence to abandon the belief that it is God's will to heal the sick. This has caused tensions in Pentecostal belief and practice, and the distinction between God's will and desire is often blurred. Jeffreys⁵⁶ writes, "I believe it to be God's will to heal today". However, he also states that the will of God is seen to incorporate the possibility of cases of non-healing.⁵⁷ Smith concludes, "We

⁵⁵ Phillips, E.J., "Lord, teach us how to pray", EE, (Sept. 30, 1961) 611.

⁵⁶ The Miraculous..., 36f.

⁵⁷ Healing Rays, 140f, 167.

must be fully persuaded of God's will to heal...and claim His promises of healing in the name of Jesus by simple faith",⁵⁸ though elsewhere he denounces those who state that lack of healing is due to lack of faith.⁵⁹ Similar difficulties arise when Dye writes, "The Bible is packed with promises of healing"⁶⁰ to be followed by an acknowledgement that "The cross does not guarantee us automatic physical healing in this life-even if we are fully obedient and full of faith".⁶¹ Although Brewster⁶² affirms the importance of Jesus as a role model for contemporary healing, he also notes⁶³ the lack of specific methodology in Jesus' ministry that one could imitate.

These contradictory views undermine suggestions that the healing authority of Jesus has been delegated by him to believers. The tension between believing that God appears to have provided a way out of suffering and at the same time, a consciousness that, for many, the escape route has not been located is ever present in Pentecostal thought. The healings of Jesus are still referred to in many prayers for the sick and appealed to as a major basis for believing that similar healings are to be expected for all believers today. The link between the healing ministry of Jesus and that of contemporary believers is still assumed by many though this is not clarified and the absence of healing is rarely addressed. Consequently, for some Christians who suffer physically or

⁵⁸ Smith, P., "The Biblical Foundation for Healing", Elim/AOG Joint Theological Conference, Swanwick (1995) 158; cf. Dye, C., Prayer that gets answers, London:Dovewell (1998) 36f.

⁵⁹ Smith, P., "A Question of Balance", EE, (May 23, 1987) 4.

⁶⁰ Healing..., 84.

⁶¹ ibid. 99.

⁶² Brewster, P.S., "The Ministry of Divine Healing", EE, (Jan. 26, 1963) 56.

⁶³ The Spreading..., 40.

mentally, their presence within some Pentecostal environments sits awkwardly in the context of a perceived belief that healing is available for all, though this discomfort is not unique to Pentecostalism and is decreasing.⁶⁴

Pentecostalism tends not to contrast medical healing and divine healing and the former is not viewed suspiciously or negatively,⁶⁵ though at times it has been viewed as an inferior form of healing.⁶⁶ Instead, it has generally been acknowledged that divine healing and medicine should not be confused⁶⁷

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- ⁶⁴ cf. an advertisement for the Deaf Christian Fellowship in EE (Jan. 7, 1961) 4; Bunting, K., "Helping the Handicapped", Direction, (Mar. 1991) 24f; Reeves (C., "Surely a ramp is enough", Direction, (May 1994) 14f) calls for more to be done to make Pentecostal churches more accessible for disabled people while Drew (R., "The problems of infertility", Direction, (Oct. 1992) 14f) discusses the painful problem of infertility, offering seven potential remedies for those who suffer in this way, none of which relate to prayer, all of which are medically based; Potter (D., "New Visitors to Bognor", Direction, (Feb. 1996) 28f; "Learning to help those who find it hard to learn", Joy, 17 (Feb. 1996) 32f) refers to the fact that people with learning difficulties, who have "historically and actually been 'outsiders'", are now welcomed at a joint Elim/AOG Conference with the option of attending a range of meetings and activities especially geared to their particular interests with a sensitive recognition of their needs.
- ⁶⁵ Brewster, P. S., The Approach to Divine Healing, London:Elim (n.d.) 10; Calley, M.J.C., God's People, London:OUP (1965) 94; AOG, Who we are and what we believe, Springfield: GPH (1982) 23; so Parker, P., (ed.) EBC Correspondence School, 26.5 (n.d. n.p.); the NTCG Supplement to the Declaration of Faith, article 11, reads, "It is recognised that all healing is provided by the goodness of God, whether that healing is administered by counsel, medical skills or the application of medicine itself"; cf. Baldwin, R., Healing and Wholeness, Milton Keynes:Word (1988) 168f; Hollenweger, The Pentecostals, 367; Parker, Divine..., 37-40; Jeffreys, Healing..., 157f; Tee, Healing..., 14; Gee (SH, 9 (1950) 2ff, 33ff) argues in favour of psychiatry in the treatment of those depressed and/or mentally ill, commenting favourably on the works of Freud and Jung; Petts (D., "Healing and the Atonement", unpubl. Ph.D., Nottingham University (1993)) employs Mk. 2:17 (264), Lk. 10:29-37 and Rev. 3:18 (268) as evidence; similarly he argues that Mk. 5:25f (263f) may not be viewed as a condemnation of medicine.
- ⁶⁶ Squire, The Healing..., 29; Canty, in Sermons of Fire and Faith, (ed.) Banks, M., (1989) Bolton:Sharon Press 90; Baldwin, R., "Health and Healing", Redemption, (Aug. 1990) 37.
- ⁶⁷ Greenway, H.W., The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit, London:Elim (n.d.)

neither should it be assumed that divine healing is "a substitute for obedience to the rules of physical and mental health"⁶⁸ or "a means of avoiding the effects of old age".⁶⁹ However, there was an earlier tradition that advocated an anti-medical stance.⁷⁰

This latter belief has significantly decreased in recent decades, Baldwin,⁷¹ arguing that all healings have divine origin and therefore that recourse to

10; Carter, H., The Gifts of the Spirit, London:Defoe (1946) 92; Kingston, Fulness..., 42; Brewster, "The Ministry...", 56; Tee, Healing..., 4.

⁶⁸ Gee, Trophimus..., 16; cf. Tee, "The Doctrine...", 198; Jeffreys (Healing, 44) quotes Ps. 107:17f; Gal. 6:7; Wright (Our Quest..., 38, 41) cites "pollution, folly... smoking ...hectic living, self indulgence...denial of...exercise...recreation... overwork as in the case of Epaphroditus" (148); Roy, H.C., MD. "Your emotions and your health", EE, (Feb. 16, 1963) 104-107; Greenway, H.W., "The person and work of the Holy Spirit", EE, (Feb. 23, 1963) 118; "Wiseowl", (Apr., 1988) 8.

⁶⁹ AOG, "Our position...", 10.

⁷⁰ Burton (Missionary..., 15), in response to the possibility of his protecting himself via the use of quinine, as did other missionaries, responds, "I would rather die than disgrace His cause". Nevertheless, for the sake of the gospel being preached to the unevangelised and out of consideration for his partner, he implies that he would be willing to take it; others in the Congo Mission refused and at least 9 died as a result. Parr (J.N., Divine Healing, Stockport:AOG Publishing House (1930) 38ff) questions the necessity and even validity of medicine; cf. Horton, The Gifts..., 106; Richards, W.T.H., Divine Healing, Slough:Advance Press (1968) 24f; Montgomery, The Prayer..., 20; contra Kirkby, W.W., "Healing for the Body", EE, 66; Carter (H., "The Supernatural Aspect of all the Gifts", SH, (Sept. 13, 1941) 2) argues, "When we accept the services of the doctor we are standing on no higher level than unconverted people"; it is of interest to note that in his photograph in the book, The Gifts..., he is wearing glasses; Cove (God's Covenant..., 30) states, "Divine healing is the exclusive method of healing the Christian...Doctors dislike it when they are treating a case for the patient to secretly call in another doctor for consultation. The Heavenly Father dislikes it as well"; Wilson (B.R., Sects and Society, London:Heinemann (1961) 17) in a dated description of Elim states, "It is never suggested that medical treatment is wrong...but the sick are exhorted first to turn to God in prayer"; Hicklin (R., "Divine Healing", RT, (Feb. 18, 1982) 11) states, "The easy availability of medical help under the National Health Scheme is a major enemy to Divine Healing", his view being strongly criticised in a subsequent edition of RT (58.24).

⁷¹ Baldwin, "Health...", 37.

medication is appropriate for the Christian; this represents the popular view in Pentecostalism today. Dialogue and integration with medical practices, though as yet inadequately developed within Pentecostalism, have occurred.⁷²

Nevertheless, the former stance is a measure of the belief that believers should go to Jesus for their healing as did his contemporaries, such is the belief that healing is available today for all as reflected in the ministry of Jesus.

Death has been infrequently viewed positively as an entrance into the presence of God. A recent inclusion in Direction,⁷³ the official monthly magazine of Elim, suggests, "The fact that deaths occur does not necessarily mean they are God's will...in my opinion, fatal accidents are examples of people dying before their time and cannot be said to be God's will", though no biblical substantiation is offered. This perspective has had its opponents.⁷⁴

Speaking of death and referring to 2 Kings 13:14, Gee⁷⁵ notes that since "the context gives not the slightest indication that he (Elisha) had failed spiritually...it is fanatical to rule out all place for possible sickness, and ultimately...a sickness unto death". Waite⁷⁶ recommends that the believer needs to see death in the context of eternity.

⁷² Suffield (M., MD., in "Doctors are now praying for the sick", Joy, (May, 1995) 2f) offers an integrated approach to healing including prayer for the sick; see the articles by Baldwin, in Redemption ("Health and Healing", (May-Dec., 1990; Feb.-Nov., 1991) dealing with health related issues including childlessness, stress, anxiety, abuse and ethical issues including drugs and medicine.

⁷³ Wiseowl, Direction, (Dec. 1995) 12; Cove, Why some..., 106, 108.

⁷⁴ Tee, "The Doctrine...", 207; Parr, Divine..., 54; Barclift, M.A., "Why some Christians are not healed", Paraclete, 20.3 (1986) 16; Smith ("A Question...", 5) states, "death for the believer, is the ultimate healing"; Croucher, R., "Hard Questions on Healing", EE, (March 8, 1986) 4f.

⁷⁵ Gee, Trophimus..., 16.

⁷⁶ Waite, D., "Why do the good die young?", Direction, (Nov. 1995) 17; cf. Tee,

Nevertheless, it is not surprising to note that in all the editions of the Elim Evangel, on only one occasion has an article been provided which records the death of a Christian (from cancer) which also includes a testimony offering advice to others who are ill without a reference to prayer for healing.⁷⁷ The testimony of the missionary, Joy Bath, is recorded after she contracted Aids, as a result of her missionary activities in Zimbabwe, from which she subsequently died.⁷⁸ The crucial need for an articulated Pentecostal theology of suffering is still awaited. Within Pentecostalism, the developing role of the gift of teaching and the increasing recognition of its importance to the stability and edification of the Church will help inform and instruct believers from a more biblically circumscribed perspective.

The information recorded above demonstrates that the assumption that Jesus may be viewed as a paradigm for healing today because he healed all who came to him for healing has been challenged by some throughout the history of Pentecostalism though the belief that Jesus delegated his authority to all believers is still maintained by many. No one within Pentecostalism has presented a credible alternative, arguments against Cessationism often clouding the debate. As will be demonstrated, although Jesus may not have

Healing..., 12f; Wright (Our Quest..., 15) refers to Paul's awareness of the fact that his body was perishing (Rom. 8:19, 21; 2 Cor. 4:16), to OT heroes who were also sick (Asa (1 Kings 15:14, 23), Elisha (2 Kings 13:14)) and comments that Moses' good health was an exception (Deut. 34:1, 7) in the context of others who were less fortunate (Gen. 27:1; 48:10; Josh. 13:1; 1 Sam. 3:2).

⁷⁷ Craggs, R., EE, (Mar. 8, 1986) 3; Osman (M., "Why Affliction", EE, (Sept. 13, 1986) 13) posits positive gains as a result of her unhealed condition; cf. Croucher, "Hard...", 4f.

⁷⁸ Bath, J., "She caught Aids", Direction, (Dec. 1995) 24ff.

changed, his mission has. His incarnational mode and ministry was unique and therefore, by definition, inimitable.

Jesus' death is the guarantee that his healing ministry is to be perpetuated

The death of Jesus is recognised by many as being a crucial element in the belief that he delegated his authority to believers.⁷⁹ Cove⁸⁰ stipulates that the provision of bodily healing has been included in the Atonement while Jeter⁸¹ concludes "It is up to the Christian...to appropriate by faith...the healing that we need". In these writings, there has been a noticeable omission of exegesis and an emphasis on the provision of proof texts such as Matthew 8:17.

⁷⁹ The Fundamental Beliefs of the AOG (and the NTCG) from the initial minutes ((Jan-May 1924) 2) affirm that "Deliverance from sickness is provided for in the Atonement". Although the 1923, 1925 Elim constitutions included the item, "we believe that deliverance from sickness is provided for in the Atonement and is the privilege of all who believe", by 1928, it was excised; nevertheless many Pentecostal leaders espoused the view including Brewster, "The Ministry...", 57; Cove, How to make..., 41; Parsons, "It is...", 7; Hoover, "Divine Healing", 45; Tee, Healing..., 9; Carter, J., The Doctrine and Practice of Divine Healing and Deliverance, Paper delivered to the British Pentecostal Fellowship, London (Dec., 1960) 3; Canty, G., "Why I preach Divine healing", EE, (Aug. 31, 1963) 549.

⁸⁰ Cove, God's Covenant..., 15; cf. Banks, "Divine Healing", RT, (May 17, 1979) 10f, 14; Baldwin, R. MD., "Is there a remedy?", RT, (Feb. 1989) 11; Article 11 of the Declaration of Faith of the NTCG reads, "Divine Healing is provided for all in the Atonement"; Brewster confirms that healing is provided in the atonement (P.S., in Banks, M., The Astonishing Jesus, Bolton: Sharon Press (1988) 70) though elsewhere ("The Ministry...", 57), he states he is agnostic about this possibility.

⁸¹ Jeter, H., By His Stripes, Springfield: GPH (1977) 35.

Popular belief amongst many Pentecostals concerning the value of the Atonement for healing has tended not to reflect a sensitivity to relevant biblical references; as will be demonstrated, those who have interacted with the texts concerned have provided a more nuanced response. Though some view the Atonement as the basis for believing that it forms the springboard for emulating the healing ministry of Jesus, others disagree, noting the paucity of evidence for such a belief. A number of comments indicate the inadequacy of such a theory.

1. Jesus did not wait until after his death before pronouncing healing. His authority was registered throughout his life. This has a profound impact on the view that his death initiates the release of that power so that the believer may emulate the works of Jesus. The fulfilment of Matthew 8:17 is presented by Matthew, in the context of a healing miracle long before the Passion of Jesus, as being during the life of Jesus, not after his death.⁸² The significance of Matthew 8:17 is (in contrast to Mark and Luke) in the context of Matthew's perception that the healing of Peter's mother-in-law was a fulfilment of prophecy, as located in Isaiah 53:4. The next healing miracle in Matthew (9:1-9) provides the author with a similar

⁸² Further exegesis of Is. 53:4 is inappropriate; sufficient to note that Matthew's divergence from the LXX and his individualistic use of specific verbs indicate that he has adapted the passage for his own hermeneutical purposes; the reversion to the more literal rendering of the MT is valuable for Matthew who sees it being fulfilled in the healing ministry of Jesus; cf. Sapp (D.A., "The LXX, 1QIsa, and MT versions of Isaiah 53 and the Christian Doctrine of Atonement", Jesus and the Suffering Servant. Isaiah 53 and Christian Origins, (eds.) Bellinger, W.H.Jr., Farmer, W.R., Harrisburg:Trinity (1998) 170-192) for an examination of the similarities and dissimilarities.

opportunity to present the narrative as another fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy (Ps. 103:3). It is of particular interest to note the occasions where Matthew, in contrast to Mark and Luke, refers to Isaianic passages in the context of healing narratives⁸³ and at other times, where allusions are identifiable.⁸⁴ For Matthew, Isaiah is an important reference to the past especially in the context of determining the role of Jesus in his healing ministry as the fulfilment of the Old Testament prophecies concerning the Messiah.

2. One of the other main texts used to support the link between healing and the Atonement is 1 Peter 2:24. However, the context is of spiritual restoration; the only suffering is of punishment or physical abuse as a result of being a Christian. Peter encourages the reader to emulate Jesus who also suffered (v. 21) rather than seek to remove the suffering. Petts,⁸⁵ the Principal of Mattersey Hall, the British AOG Bible College and a member of the AOG Executive Council, notes, "When correctly exegeted, it cannot reasonably be understood to teach the doctrine that

⁸³ Matt. 12:16-21 (Is. 42:1-4); Matt. 12:24 (Is. 42:1).

⁸⁴ Matt. 12:11f (Is. 40:10f, 49:9f); Matt. 12:29f (Is. 49:24f); cf. Leske, A.M., "Isaiah and Matthew. The Prophetic Influence in the First Gospel. A Report on Current Research", Jesus and the Suffering Servant. Isaiah 53 and Christian Origins, (eds.) Bellinger, W.H.Jr., Farmer, W.R., Harrisburg: Trinity (1998) 152-169.

⁸⁵ Petts, "Healing...", unpubl. Ph. D., 192. He notes, "The 'healing' referred to clearly means a spiritual wholeness which results from Christ's bearing our sins on the Cross...Peter takes Isaiah 53:5 and applies it, in the context of Christ's redemptive work on the Cross, to healing from the wounds of sin, but no thought of physical healing is in mind" (154).

healing is in the Atonement". Other Pentecostals also view healing as an indirect result of the Atonement though not inevitably so in this life.⁸⁶

3. The limited number of healings in the history of Classical Pentecostalism undermines the quality of the apparent premise that the death of Jesus has introduced the possibility of unqualified healings for all believers. The presence of sickness and death is an obvious reminder that these issues have not been finally resolved despite that which Christ achieved on the Cross.

⁸⁶ cf. Jeffreys, Healing..., 37; Hathaway, W.G., "Divine Healing Lectures", (hand written) (1950) 3; Parker, Divine..., 31; Cornish Jones, W., "Is healing in the atonement?", EE, (Oct. 13, 1962) 646f; Wright, Our Quest..., 62f; Gee, Trophimus..., 25; Petts, D., "Healing and the Atonement", paper presented at a Joint Elim/AOG Theological Conference, Swanwick (1995) 141-156; Petts, Healing..., (31-70 for a survey of the development within Pentecostalism concerning the relationship between healing and the Atonement of Christ); Taylor, "A Historical Perspective...", 76. In a questionnaire supervised by Elim Bible College and completed by Pentecostals in 1977, those polled were asked to respond to the following question: Is healing in the Atonement in the sense that Christ bore our sicknesses in His suffering just as He bore our sins? As is revealed by the data, the group who responded most positively to the question were church members while leaders were more sceptical followed by theology students who were most sceptical. Responses in tabular form:

| | <u>Yes</u> | <u>No</u> | <u>Uncertain</u> | <u>Total Responses</u> |
|-----------------------------|---------------|---------------|------------------|------------------------|
| <u>Leaders/Ministers</u> | 34 (54.8%) | 11 (17.7%) | 17 (27.4%) | 62 (100%) |
| <u>Theological Students</u> | 7 (19.4%) | 12 (33.3%) | 17 (47.7%) | 36 (100%) |
| <u>Church members</u> | 64 (71.9%) | 7 (7.8%) | 18 (20.2%) | 89 (100%) |

Jesus healed in evangelistic contexts; evangelism is an ongoing activity of the Church; therefore, healing is anticipated now

Healing, both contemporary and in the ministry of Jesus, has been recognised as serving a higher purpose, namely the proclamation of the Gospel. The relationship between healing and evangelism has always been prominent in Pentecostalism,⁸⁷ Gee⁸⁸ noting that healings "have their true sphere in evangelism rather than among the saints", commenting that healings "proved of tremendous value at times in the propagation of the Gospel".⁸⁹ Petts⁹⁰ provides Mark 6:16-20 as evidence for "divine healing in the context of evangelism".

⁸⁷ cf. Hathaway, W.G., The Gifts of the Spirit in the Church, London: Benhill Church Press (1933) 45; Gee, D., Concerning Spiritual Gifts, Springfield: GPH (1938) 38; Womack, D.A., Breaking the Stain-Glass Barrier, New York: Harper and Row (1973) 57f; Brewster, The Spreading..., 46; Parr, Divine..., 7f; Banks (Healing Secrets, 39) notes, "healing acts as a beacon for the Gospel, attracting attention to it"; The Best Sermons and Stories (private publication, 1979), 26f; Canty, The Practice..., 177ff; Martin, T., "Prophetic Healing", Bread, 7 (Sept.-Oct., 1982) 18; Partington, J., "Miracles should be the norm", Redemption, (Apr. 1991) 5-7; Zbinden, J.J., "Alongside a Pioneer Healing Evangelist", Redemption, (Apr. 1991) 10-12.

⁸⁸ Gee (Trophimus..., 9f) notes of Paul, "neither for himself, nor for those who were members of his missionary band, did he practice Divine healing"; cf. Dewet, C., "The Missing Element", RT, (Oct. 1988) 14; Horton, The Gifts..., 115. Some promulgated the belief that ministry to the sick was only to follow a personal commitment to Christ (Hoy, "Gifts...", 9; Parker, Divine..., 49ff, 79f; Brewster, The Approach..., 17; Cove, Why some..., 75). The latter are contrasted with the healing ministry of Jesus. Wright (Our Quest..., 145) is one of the few who maintained an alternative view claiming, "God sometimes heals the non-Christian, but the promises of healing are to His people".

⁸⁹ Gee, Concerning..., 38; cf. Horton, The Gifts..., 111ff; Jeter, H.P., "Power...present to heal", Paraclete, 8.1 (1974) 5; Hacking, W., "Some Aspects of Divine Healing", RT, (Mar. 26, 1981) 6.

⁹⁰ Petts, D., "You'd better believe it", Redemption, (April 1991) 37; cf. Linford, A Course..., 48.

Regular announcements were published in the *Elim Evangel* particularly in the 1960's relating to "Evangelistic and divine healing campaigns".⁹¹ However, problems were created by these campaigns in that often, few lasting conversions were recorded⁹² and the costs were high.⁹³ Consequently, they lessened until they were a rare occurrence in the normal life of British Pentecostal churches. It may be of significance to note that a regular feature in *Redemption*⁹⁴ (1990-1992) concerning testimonies of signs and wonders exclusively related to events abroad.

Most healings in Pentecostal contexts are now anticipated for the benefit of believers, rather than unbelievers in evangelistic scenarios. Any similarity to the ministry of Jesus, in which healings were partly intended as stepping stones to faith is to a large degree now absent. Indeed, the high expectancy of healings in past evangelistic contexts was rarely fulfilled and even some of those who were healed did not become believers⁹⁵; these factors were among

⁹¹ Apr. 18, May 20, 27, June 17, Aug. 26, Sept. 2, Oct. 21, 28, Nov. 4, 11, 1961; Sept. 1, 8, 1962; Feb. 9, Mar. 2, 23, Apr. 6, June 22, Aug. 3, Sept. 14, 1963; Apr. 11, Sept. 12, 19, 1964; Mar. 19, 1966; Apr. 13, 20, May 11, 18, 25, 1968; June 29, 1969.

⁹² Gee (D., "The Donald Gee Column", *VH*, (May 1952) 11; "After Healing - What?", *VH*, (Feb. 1955) 10, 22) exhorts those with a healing ministry to encourage salvation in the experience of unbelievers who are healed; cf. "Deliverance is not enough", *EE*, (Apr. 15, 1961) 230f; Kay, W., *Inside Story*, Mattersey: AOG Bible College (1990) 341.

⁹³ Circumspectus, "Looking Around", *SH*, (Dec. 15, 1949) 224f. Desmond Cartwright asserted in a private conversation with the author that this anonymous contributor was Donald Gee.

⁹⁴ May-Dec. 1990; Jan.-Dec., 1991; Jan., Feb., April, May-July 1992.

⁹⁵ Gee (D., "Healed-but not saved", *VH*, (Jan. 1954) 11) advises evangelists to emphasise the priority of salvation of the soul over that of the body because of those who were healed but refused to become Christians.

those that helped bring about the demise of such campaigns.⁹⁶ Allen⁹⁷ confirms that this deterioration in healings had been recognised earlier, there being considerably less in the 1940's than in the late 1920's and 1930's. The role of the healing evangelist has largely now been replaced by a local church based practice of prayer by the leadership in the context of corporate prayer for those suffering. Latterly, the Charismatic Renewal⁹⁸ in particular, has been influential in establishing the context of divine healing as the corporate gathering of Christians where prayer for one another or by a wider group is undertaken. In practice, therefore, the healing ministry of Jesus has become marginalised as the model to be emulated.

However, most importantly, the basic premise that Jesus healed in order to instil faith in his mission and person is only partly true. If it was the only motivation, the record would indicate that his mission was a failure. Indeed, the Twelve are not recorded as becoming disciples on the basis of witnessing

⁹⁶ J.T. Bradley wrote to E.J. Phillips on Oct. 5 1941, "It will be a great thing if we could get back to those Fundamentals of Elim which distinguished us...namely Divine Healing...I fear we are getting away from these very quickly"; Molly Phillips wrote to the Elim ministers asking for prayer for her husband (E. J.) on April 14, 1943, asking that God would heal as "in the early days" suggesting that a paucity of miraculous healing was the norm at the time. From 1959, a sharp and marked reduction in testimonies of healings are recorded in the Voice of Healing, their place being taken by articles relating to end time prophecy and reports of missionary endeavours.

⁹⁷ Allen, D., "Signs and Wonders: Origins, Growth, Development and Significance of Assemblies of God in Great Britain and Ireland, 1900-1980", unpubl. Ph. D., London University (1990) 198.

⁹⁸ Richards, "The Healing...", 155; Taylor ("A Historical...", 74) notes the importance of Trevor Dearing, Peter Horrobin, Don Double and John Gunstone; Flipot, G., "Illness and Healing in the Charismatic Renewal", LV, 41.1 (1986) 74-85.

a healing by Jesus. Other aspects of his ministry are to be recognised as having significant value in the accession of followers.

Jesus promised that believers would emulate him

Among Classical Pentecostals, a major motivational force in the above belief is located in the healing ministry of Jesus.⁹⁹ Jeffreys¹⁰⁰ states, "The commission to go and preach and to expect the signs, including healing, to follow, has never been withdrawn: Mk. 16:15-18". Thus, as Jesus laid hands on the sick and they recovered, Pentecostals are encouraged to do the same and expect similar results,¹⁰¹ Dinsdale¹⁰² describing it as a "central doctrine". However, Petts¹⁰³ notes, "not all who have hands laid on them will be healed". Such dissension illustrates that among some, the apparent centrality of this element has been questioned.

⁹⁹ Elim Lay..., 39f; Parker, P., Divine Healing, London: Victory Press (1931) 7; Barrie, "The Gifts...", SH, (Oct. 15, 1948) 189f; Canty, G., In My Father's House, Basingstoke: MMS (1969) 83.

¹⁰⁰ Jeffreys, The Miraculous..., 36ff.

¹⁰¹ Redemption Hymnal, 736; Linford, A., A Course of Study on Spiritual Gifts, London: AOG Publishing House (n.d.) 48; Kirkby, "Healing...", 67; Brewster, P.S., "The Stigma of the Supernatural", EE, (Feb. 24, 1962) 116; Kingston, C.E., "Laying on of hands", EE, (July 23, 1966) 473; Tee, "The Doctrine...", 202; The Approach..., 15; Drew, M., "Gifts of Healing", Bread, 7 (May-June, 1980) 10.

¹⁰² Dinsdale, E., "Ointment", SH, (Mar. 15, 1949) 59f.

¹⁰³ Petts, "You'd better...", 37; from an early stage, there was scepticism concerning "wholesale healing" by the laying on of hands (see letter from W. Henderson to E.J. Phillips (6 Dec. 1928)).

Canty,¹⁰⁴ a leading Elim evangelist for decades, representing much Pentecostal thinking, writes forcefully, "We are promised healing and commanded to heal the sick. If we do not heal the sick we are guilty before God and failing in our obligation to God and mankind". Oblivious to the paucity of evidence for his assertion, Allen¹⁰⁵ stresses the compassion of Christ for the sick as a reason for his ministry of healing, on the basis of which, he advocates that believers follow the example of Jesus and, in compassion, anticipate the possibility of healing of the sick. The explicit conclusion to be drawn from this is that divine healing is available if compassion is in evidence. Incongruously however, Canty¹⁰⁶ notes that the fact that God loves all does not necessarily mean that he chooses to heal all.

The view that Jesus is a paradigm in his healing ministry is tenaciously maintained by some Pentecostals. However, too often, the expectation anticipated by many Pentecostals is not fulfilled. Thus, although Dye¹⁰⁷ advises, "God wants you to grab the devil as if he were a wild animal. And He wants you to throw him out" because "he wants to take your health", this is infrequently achieved. Walker,¹⁰⁸ more stridently, but accurately, affirms, "miracles have been testified to in abundance, but rarely verified".

¹⁰⁴ "Biblical Foundations...", 126, 128; cf. Canty (G., "Why some are not healed", Bread, 7 (Sept.-Oct., 1982) 21) claims that to be healed is normal.

¹⁰⁵ "Divine...", (July 30, 1966) 488; cf. Parker, Divine... 8; Banks, Healing Secrets, 38; Barrie, "The Gifts...", (Oct. 15, 1948) 190; Canty, "Heal...", 2.9f; Gee (D., "The Donald Gee Column", VH, (April 1952) 20) agrees though cautions that compassion for the sick will not necessarily improve the chances of restoration.

¹⁰⁶ Canty, G., "Car ride to a revelation", EE, (Nov. 30, 1963) 755.

¹⁰⁷ Prayer..., 34f.

¹⁰⁸ Charismatic..., 125.

Reasons are offered for this lack of healing other than the option that the basic premise may be faulty. Canty¹⁰⁹ explains, "It is the will of God that all shall be well, but not necessarily His will that I can bestow a healing upon everybody in every meeting. Only Christ would operate at that level". He thus qualifies the apparent promise contained in the commission of Jesus concerning healing that many have assumed has validity for believers today; his reason is probably due to experience that acknowledges not all are healed despite the best attempts by all concerned. However, the significant differences between the healing ministries of Jesus and believers and the implication that believers can be obstacles to delegated authority undermines the quality of the apparent promise.

Dye¹¹⁰ argues, "Jesus always ministered with an absolute certainty...that the Father's willingness to heal extended to all", concluding, "There is no evidence that Jesus ever told anyone to wait for the resurrection for their healing - he healed people then and there".¹¹¹ However, he also notes, "Jesus' divinity, sinlessness, perfect obedience and unlimited anointing must surely mean that we cannot always expect to be as effective in ministry as him".¹¹² Despite this conclusion, he still claims, "There are so many healing promises in the Bible for believers that we can turn to the God who heals us any time we are unwell and be certain he is willing to heal us".¹¹³ Similarly, Hoover¹¹⁴ deduces that

¹⁰⁹ Canty, The Practice..., 180f.

¹¹⁰ Healing..., 12f.

¹¹¹ ibid, 84.

¹¹² ibid, 84.

¹¹³ ibid, 54.

¹¹⁴ "Divine...", 45.

healing will not be granted unless the sufferers “pray...believe His word... exercise faith...live a clean life...be filled with the Holy Ghost, and...observe the laws of health”.

These unresolved tensions may be located amongst Pentecostals throughout their history and is a testimony to their willingness to cling to beliefs that are viewed as being accurate biblical perceptions, rather than accept that which reality dictates. This is a fundamental Pentecostal stance. Reality is not viewed as being a legitimate arbiter; the latter is determined by their perception of faith and their interpretation of Scripture. Instead of considering the possibility that Jesus’ healing ministry may have been unique, they prefer to believe that the healing authority of his followers and its implementation is of an inferior quality, thus fatally undermining their belief that Jesus delegated his authority to believers.

To suggest that the healing authority of Jesus is delegated to his followers is thus severely qualified and the possibility of it being emulated is at best only partial and therefore prone to inconsistency and uncertainty. Either his authority is delegated or it is not; to be left with an uncertain paradigm is no paradigm at all. As will be indicated, the many reasons offered for the substantial numbers of people who are not healed undermine the claim that delegated authority has been granted by Jesus to believers.

Jesus depended on the Holy Spirit as do believers

Dye,¹¹⁵ the senior Pastor of one of the largest Pentecostal churches in Europe, explains the practical relevance thus: “As God, Jesus was able to...heal the sick...but he had chosen not to ‘use’ his divinity, and he also made it clear that - in his humanity - he was utterly powerless. The miraculous did not occur because Jesus was God, but because he was filled with the Spirit without measure and always moved in perfect harmony with the Father”. In this regard, Jesus is to be viewed as a model for all believers to emulate with the help of the Spirit.¹¹⁶

This belief is linked to the view that Jesus was empowered at his baptism, by the infusion of the Spirit who was given to enable Jesus to achieve his mission, including his capacity to heal.¹¹⁷ Dye¹¹⁸ writes, “If we think that Jesus healed people only because he was divine, it is likely we will assume that we can have

¹¹⁵ Dye, Healing..., 28.

¹¹⁶ Dye (Prayer..., 81) notes, “You have the authority of Jesus to exercise the power of the Second Adam”; similarly, Simpson (A.B., “The Holy Spirit and the Body”, EE., (Oct., 18, 1943) 401) writes that Jesus has given to the believer “the very same power which he exercised”, with the consequence that “The healing of disease today is assured by the presence and power of the Spirit as much as when Christ was here”.

¹¹⁷ Healing..., 47; Simpson (“The Holy...”, 401) writes, “He (Jesus) claimed to exercise all these ministries directly through the power of the Holy Spirit which had come upon him. Not in His own right, therefore, nor by the exercise of His inherent Deity did He do these things, for He had none of them prior to His anointing by the Spirit at the Jordan, but simply as a Vessel and Temple of the Holy Ghost. Nor can we forget that the same Holy Ghost is still with us, abiding now in the Body as then He did in the Head”. The implication popularly drawn from such a presentation is that believers may function exactly as did Jesus, notwithstanding the paucity of evidence for the premise that Jesus was unable to function supernaturally prior to his experience at the Jordan.

¹¹⁸ ibid., 49.

no share in his healing ministry. Whereas, if we grasp that he healed because he was anointed, we can reasonably expect to have some part in the healing ministry - as long as we are anointed with the same Spirit". It is in this regard that the baptism of the Spirit, viewed in Classical Pentecostalism as a secondary experience after conversion, becomes of crucial importance and acts as the basis for a similar potential of healing power being owned by those who have experienced it. Thus, Dye¹¹⁹ writes, "The dramatic change from their general ineffectiveness in the Gospels to their startling power in Acts can be put down to...the difference made by their anointing with the Spirit at Pentecost". He writes, "Before Calvary, Jesus' disciples healed in the same way as Gehazi had tried to heal. After Pentecost, they healed...as full members of God's anointed, prophetic, interceding, healing community".¹²⁰ Thus, he attempts to draw a line of continuity from Jesus through the disciples to the contemporary believer.

However, he is over-enthusiastic about the presentation of the healing ministry of the Apostles as recorded in the book of Acts, given that only Peter is referred to in such a context. Indeed, the evidence from the book of Acts is that the Spirit functions in the Church, though not exclusively through the Apostles. Secondly, he is inaccurate to describe those pre-Pentecost years as ineffective or related to the Old Testament era.¹²¹ Thus, his attempt to draw a contrast between their healing ministries before and after Pentecost is

¹¹⁹ ibid, 51.

¹²⁰ ibid, 59.

¹²¹ The following verses provide evidence of the success of the disciples before Pentecost (Mt. 10:1, 8; Mk. 6:7, 13; Lk. 9:1, 6).

hampered by questionable logic and exposition. Thirdly, he is to be critiqued for his assumption that the role of the Spirit for Jesus at the Jordan was only to empower him. This, he chooses not to support. If it can be demonstrated that the role of the Spirit was for another purpose other than, or as well as, empowering, any parallel with the disciples being empowered is to be questioned. This will be examined later. Sufficient to say at this stage is that the role of the Spirit need not have been only for empowerment. Fourthly, any attempt to parallel the role of the Spirit at Jordan with Jesus and at Pentecost with the disciples is flawed unless it takes into consideration the significant dissimilarities in those accounts. Finally, the paradigm is unfulfilled; the quality of Jesus' healing ministry has not been realised by believers who live in the post-Pentecost era. Given the uncertainty of the foundational premise, the assumption resting on it that believers can emulate the ministry of Jesus is to be regarded as similarly unproven.

Conclusion

There are major difficulties with the above premises. The assumptions that Jesus' healing ministry continues unabated is not demonstrated in the New Testament, nor in the Church era. Similarly, the belief that Jesus' healing authority has been delegated to believers is insubstantially evidenced. The logic of the apparent parallelism between Jesus and believers with regard to the Holy Spirit is flawed, as shall be demonstrated. Finally, the difference in

healing success in Pentecostalism indicates that a different model is being followed than the ministry of Jesus.

These problems are compounded by stark differences in praxis and belief between the healing ministry of Jesus and that reflected in Pentecostalism.

Major dissimilarities with Jesus' healing ministry

It will now be demonstrated that although Pentecostals affirm the importance of Jesus' healing role to his mission, they also recognise motifs integral to it that distinguish it from their own experiences of healing. As such, it is difficult to view the healing ministry of Jesus as a model for believers to emulate. Some major differences will be examined in order to demonstrate their significance in Pentecostal healing scenarios whilst also indicating a recurring distinction between Jesus' healing ministry and that of contemporary believers.¹²²

Faith

The issue of faith is a popular feature for Pentecostals with regard to healing and is undergirded by their song strata.¹²³ It is also a crucially important

¹²² Taylor ("A Historical Perspective...", 74) accurately notes, for example, "One feature of modern healing ministries in Pentecostalism is the belief that the healer can receive 'revelation' of the sickness and its causes...spoken out publicly in a 'word of knowledge'". However, although it is claimed that this is located also in the ministry of Jesus, it is a distinctive element in contemporary healing praxis and absent from the records of the healing ministry of Jesus.

¹²³ Redemption..., 730, 731; Elim Choruses, 383, 469.

ingredient in the narratives detailing the healings of Jesus. However, there are major differences in the definition of faith and it is these that serve to distinguish much modern healing praxis from that of Jesus. They also undermine the claim that believers may emulate the healing ministry of Jesus.

Whose faith?

Whether faith is to be exerted by the sufferer, the one who is praying or by both of them has been a vexed issue for many. Kingston¹²⁴ believes, "The emphasis on faith bears rather on the one who lays hands on than on the sick person...if there is no recovery...the first person's faith to be queried is not the sick person's but the minister's". However, Evans¹²⁵ states, "Usually, it is the faith of the person healed" that effects the healing. Banks¹²⁶ argues, "Healing can be helped by the faith of those around us...what the (sufferer)...lacked in faith was made up by the expectant faith of others". Similarly, Cove,¹²⁷ referring to Matthew 11:20-24, describes the negative influence on a healing situation of "community unbelief". Horton¹²⁸ presents the importance of all concerned exercising faith including the sufferer, minister and others associated with the sufferer. Such diverse opinions indicate confusion and consequent uncertainty especially in contexts of ministry to the sick when faith

¹²⁴ Kingston, "Laying...", 473; cf. "A Question...", 13f.

¹²⁵ Evans, F.G., "Divine Healing", EE, (Feb. 3, 1968) 69; cf. Linford, A Course..., 51; Banks, Sermons..., 29f; Sawyer, "According...", 631; Barrie, "The Gifts...", (Oct. 15, 1948) 191; Cove, How to make..., 68.

¹²⁶ Banks, Healing Secrets, 118; cf. Wright, Our Quest..., 74.

¹²⁷ Cove, Why some..., 132.

¹²⁸ Horton, The Gifts..., 115.

is anticipated as being a vital element of the procedure, though uncertainty reigns concerning whose faith is to be provided.

Although there are apparent links with the ministry of Jesus in that the concept of faith is mentioned therein, these need to be carefully assessed. In particular, the identity of the faith referred to needs thoughtful delineation. In the ministry of Jesus, whenever faith is mentioned, it never refers to his own faith; instead, it alludes to the faith of the sufferer or others.

The identification of faith

In many Pentecostal writings, the identity of the faith is often not clarified,¹²⁹ though some attempt an explanation.¹³⁰ At times the guidance offered is unclear.¹³¹ Wright¹³² encourages believers to "seek to strengthen your faith" in the fact that God can heal. Often sufferers are simply encouraged to develop

¹²⁹ Parr (Divine..., 26) notes that "faith is essential" for healing but though he asks the question, "Faith in what?", he does not supply an answer; cf. Horton, The Gifts..., 115).

¹³⁰ Hoy ("Gifts...", 11) defines "its foundation as not mental assent...but an unwavering trust in divine goodness and omnipotence"; Cooper (J.E.G., "The nature and source of Faith", EE, (Aug. 2, 1986) 8) defines it as "holding on to a God given revelation"; Richards (Divine..., 35, 37) describes it as "childlike" faith.

¹³¹ Thus, although Tee (A., "Why are so many Christians not healed?", EE, (March 30, 1963) 200) advocates the importance of asking God to provide an inner witness that assures the individual that healing is to be theirs, he also writes, "I have no doubt that it is God's will to heal his people". Cove (How to make..., 32) argues, "Negative confession...will make the disease stronger...if you keep talking about your sickness...you will have continual recurring attacks of it...we unconsciously confess what we believe". Banks (Healing Secrets, 116) suggests, "An important exercise in preparation for healing is to soak yourself in the Word of God" though the significance of this is not clarified.

¹³² Wright, Our Quest..., 152.

more of it as a result of which they may "enjoy their inheritance".¹³³ Variant views are again in evidence, suggestive of a confusing framework for ministry to the sick.

Banks¹³⁴ advocates "Another way of developing faith is to try it out...begin by believing God for smaller things...learn from your mistakes...try again".

Consequently, some view positively the possibility of increasing the faith that one has as a result of which restoration will occur.¹³⁵ Such guidance is absent in the ministry of Jesus that many Pentecostals assume they are emulating.

He never encouraged anyone to increase their faith before receiving healing, neither did he condemn anyone for not exhibiting enough faith. Nevertheless, Cove¹³⁶ states, "If you have no faith there will be no healing. If you have a little faith you may get a partial healing. But if you have a strong faith you will get perfect healing". Faith thus bears a fluidity in its expression, though this elasticity is not reflected in the use of the term in the ministry of Jesus. The statement that a "mustard seed of faith" is all that is necessary to move a mountain (Matt. 17:20) is a major contradiction to these attempts to harness more and more "faith" whereupon God has little alternative but to grant the healing. Those who have not been healed are deemed not to have enough faith and those who are healed are assumed to have passed the faith threshold, whether they be believers or not.

¹³³ Richards, Divine..., 35, 37; cf. Hicklin, R., "The Lord who heals", RT, (Mar. 11, 1982) 1.

¹³⁴ Banks, Healing Secrets, 68.

¹³⁵ Hoy, "Gifts...", 12; Cove, How to..., 4, 8; Banks, Healing Secrets, 71.

¹³⁶ Cove, Why some..., 17, 19; cf. Banks, Healing Secrets, 72

For many Pentecostals, faith is equated with belief in a promise; a promise that healing is the guaranteed right of the believer, proven by Jesus' ministry of healing. Thus, they assume that before God will heal them, they have to believe that he is going to do so.¹³⁷ Anything less than this is deemed to result in rejection by God as far as receiving healing is concerned. It is, in effect, an anthropocentrically-initiated faith. The fear that a lack of faith has obstructed God in his desire to heal has resulted in many experiencing guilt due to an unnecessary perception that one may have been a block to one's own healing or that of another.¹³⁸

Tee¹³⁹ states that it is "VITAL" that the person who is ill must have "an unwavering assurance, deep in their spirit, that it really is the will of God for them to be healed" stating that one can "emphatically claim that it is the will of God for us to receive healing". He notes that there a "very few exceptions".

Parr¹⁴⁰ recommends that people be "absolutely persuaded beyond any shadow

¹³⁷ Cove, G., The Master Key of Faith, Nelson:Coulton (n. d.) 229; Banks (Divine..., 53) states, "Doubt puts a limit on God. It puts a brake on His ability"; Drew, "Gifts...", 10; Smith, J., "Divine Healing", EE, (Nov. 24, 1962) 746; Parr, Divine..., 33; Barclift, "Why some...", 14f; Carter, Questions..., 11; Murray, A., "I am the Lord that healeth thee", EE, (Oct. 1, 1966) 627f; Carter, H., Spiritual Gifts and their Operation, Springfield:GPH (1968) 39; Canty, "A Question...", 14; Hoover, "Divine...", 45; Kirkby, "Healing...", 66.

¹³⁸ Canty (In My Father's..., 90) states concerning healing, "We may be sure of his will, but has he the power?...its release depends on us...He only has as much power as we let him use".

¹³⁹ Tee, Healing..., 19 (capitals his); cf. Banks, Healing Secrets, 66; Simpson, A.B., "Talk on Divine Healing", EE, (September 27, 1943) 382; Evans, "Divine...", 69; contra Gee (Trophimus..., 27f) who warns against "claiming" one's healing which he describes as "very difficult and disheartening". Likewise, he criticises those who "treat with merciless suspicion as harbouring doubt and unbelief" Christians who ask questions concerning healing being the will of God.

¹⁴⁰ Parr, Divine..., 51.

of doubt that He is going to heal them". Many would still follow the suggestion of Hacking¹⁴¹ that "unless and until the Lord makes it very plain to you that healing is not for you, lay claim tenaciously to the word of promise".

Some have therefore advocated ignoring symptoms of sickness as a proof of one's faith.¹⁴² Instead, it has been recommended that one should thank God for the healing even though it is not yet apparent.¹⁴³ There is a paucity of reflective assessment of these claims against the background of a limited number of healings. At the same time, the comprehensive healing ministry of Jesus as contrasted to contemporary healing ministries indicates that a major distinction is to be retained.

There are further contradictions and tensions expressed with regard to this issue. Canty,¹⁴⁴ for example, argues that to believe that God can heal is insufficient to receive healing. However, he also notes, "God's action often seems to be unrelated to any question of faith...Most people only have hopes...but they are still healed."¹⁴⁵ Dye¹⁴⁶ states, "It isn't worth praying if you're going to ask with doubting" followed five lines later with the statement, "He

¹⁴¹ Hacking, W., "Questions on Divine Healing", RT, (May 14, 1981) 10.

¹⁴² Cove, God's..., 33; cf. Cove (How to make..., 9) incongruously writes, "If after prayer, the healing appears to be lost, IT IS NOT THE ACTUAL DISEASE THAT HAS RETURNED, but only a symptom of the disease...It may actually be that...increased discomfort is a sign that you have been healed"; Parker, Divine..., 83-86; Banks, Healing Secrets, 67.

¹⁴³ Hicklin, "The Lord...", (Mar. 18, 1982) 5; Cove, Why some..., 99.

¹⁴⁴ Canty, G., "Some doubted...Matt. 28:17", RT, (Dec. 4, 1980) 8; cf. Koornstra, H., et al, "A Question of Healing", RT, (March 1988) 14; Tee, "Why...?", 200.

¹⁴⁵ "A Question of Healing", RT, (March 1988) 13.

¹⁴⁶ Prayer..., 49.

does answer many prayers which are not made in faith". Elsewhere, he writes, "Jesus cannot release His power into your circumstances without your confession of faith".¹⁴⁷

Faulty exegesis has often resulted in poor application.¹⁴⁸ Mark 6:5ff is a key text in the debate over the significance of faith in the context of healing.

Hathaway,¹⁴⁹ commenting on the passage states, "If lack of faith could bind the hands of the Master Himself, then no small wonder if it binds the hands of His servants". However, rather than being understood as being a barrier to the activities of Jesus, this passage, as will be demonstrated later, is to be interpreted as a decision on his part not to minister because they had rejected his person, message and mission.¹⁵⁰ Hicklin¹⁵¹ insensitively suggests, illegitimately based on John 5:6, "that some folk are not healed because they don't really want to lose their sickness, since it allows them to be the centre of attention and the recipients of tender loving care".

¹⁴⁷ ibid, 99.

¹⁴⁸ e.g.. Cove (Why some..., 24f) suggests that the faith of the one who was healed at the Pool of Bethesda was significant, the others being "selfish to the core".

¹⁴⁹ Hathaway, The Gifts..., 47; cf. Parsons, "It is God's...", 7; Brewster, The Spreading..., 45.

¹⁵⁰ Many of the above views have been qualified from pastoral and Biblical perspectives (Canty, The Practice..., 172ff; Barrie, "The Gifts...", (Oct. 15, 1948) 188; Hollenweger, W., "The Critical Tradition of Pentecostalism", JPT, 1 (1992) 15-17; Smith ("A Question...", 4) notes, "Not all who are prayed for are healed. Some tragic suggestions have been made to explain this situation, the most disgusting of which is that the individual did not have enough faith. Such comment leaves behind it...despair". Wright (Our Quest..., 13) argues, "Being in health is not necessarily evidence of exceptional faith in the Lord as the Healer any more than being sick is necessarily evidence of a lack of faith".

¹⁵¹ Hicklin, "Divine Healing", (RT, Feb. 25, 1982) 6; contra Bemrose, P., "Coping with Sickness", EE, (May 9, 1987) 13 .

The ambiguity, contradiction, difference of opinion and regular lack of clarification concerning the identification of the faith demanded in order to receive healing is a major difficulty in the articulation of a biblical statement concerning healing in Pentecostal thought and praxis. It also confirms the difference between modern healing ministries and that of Jesus.¹⁵²

The former views are to be contrasted with the healings of Jesus where the approach to Jesus for help was viewed by him as sufficient for the restoration to occur and thus designated as faith.¹⁵³ It is also significant to note the occasions when people were healed in the New Testament when no mention of faith on the part of the sufferer is mentioned.¹⁵⁴ The statements concerning the identity and significance of faith in the context of healing by many

¹⁵² In the EBC questionnaire relating to healing, mentioned above, the following question was asked: Will God always heal a sick person when prayer is offered for the healing with true faith? It is significant to note the phrase “true faith”; no clarification is offered for this concept and no guidance advanced as to whether it differs from “faith” and if so, how. More importantly, the responses demonstrate that a significant majority of those questioned reject the accuracy of the view that the presence of faith presumes the occurrence of healing. This further distances modern healing teaching and beliefs from that exemplified in the ministry of Jesus where, as will be seen, faith is often mentioned as having significant value.

| | <u>yes</u> | <u>uncertain</u> | <u>no</u> | <u>totals</u> |
|----------------------------|--------------|------------------|---------------|---------------|
| <u>Pentecostal leaders</u> | 19 (34%) | 5 (8.9%) | 32 (57.1%) | 56 |
| <u>Theology students</u> | 7 (18.4%) | 7 (18.4%) | 24 (63.1%) | 38 |
| <u>Church members</u> | 25 (28%) | 5 (5.6%) | 59 (66.2%) | 89 |

¹⁵³ Dye (Healing..., 204) is unusual among Pentecostals in that he affirms this view writing, “The mere fact that a person comes to Christ requesting healing demonstrates faith”, though this contradicts some of his earlier statements concerning the identification of faith.

¹⁵⁴ Mt. 8:14ff//s; 28ff//s; 12:9ff//s; Lk. 7:11ff; 9:37ff; 22:50f; Jn. 5:7, 13; 11:2ff.

Pentecostals are markedly different to the perception of Jesus concerning faith as will be demonstrated later. These features serve to confirm that the healing ministry of Jesus was unique. Although they claim to be emulating Jesus, in reality, many Pentecostals adopt a different agenda for their healing praxis as far as faith is concerned.

Sin

It is a well established belief amongst Pentecostals that sickness may be the result of judgement¹⁵⁵ or divine chastisement because of personal sin.¹⁵⁶

Sickness has been regularly traced back to Satan¹⁵⁷ and various texts have been provided to substantiate this view.¹⁵⁸ It has been assumed that sickness may be caused by demonic influence,¹⁵⁹ though Barrie¹⁶⁰ cautions, "It is a great danger to attribute every ailment to the work of or possession by evil spirits".

Similarly, caution is advised when diagnosing mental illness.¹⁶¹ Many

¹⁵⁵ Dye, Healing..., 111.

¹⁵⁶ Redemption..., 730; Jeffreys, quoting Ex. 15:26 (The Miraculous..., 96) and Ex. 12:23,29; Lk. 1:19ff (Healing..., 42f).

¹⁵⁷ Jeffreys, Healing, 38-42, 150f; Richards, Divine..., 22f; Wright, Our Quest..., 27-31, 37; Carter, The Gifts..., 106; Brewster, The Approach..., 12.

¹⁵⁸ Job 2:7; Lk. 11:20ff, 13:11ff; Acts 10:38.

¹⁵⁹ Allen, "Divine...", (Aug. 27, 1966) 554; Cove, Why some..., 131.

¹⁶⁰ Barrie, R., "The Discerning of Spirits", SH, (Jan. 15, 1948) 35; cf. Squintus, "Look at it with Squintus", EE, (Mar. 17, 1962) 171; Canty, G., "Do demons cause sickness", EE, (Feb. 2, 1968) 67.

¹⁶¹ Circumspectus, "Looking Around", SH, (Sept. 15, 1949) 165f; Bunting, K., in a letter to Direction ((May 1990) 25) cautions against the blurring of schizophrenia and demon possession; cf. Cunningham, V., "The Claims of Exorcists", (cont.) RT, (Dec. 6, 1973) 3f.

Pentecostals reject the equation that illness is always linked to individual sin.¹⁶²

Others point to the deep impact that sin has upon the culture of the world.¹⁶³

Personal sin has been understood to be a potential reason for a healing not occurring,¹⁶⁴ though biblical substantiation is infrequently offered. Brewster¹⁶⁵

provides a list of such sins, suggesting "unrepentance of unconfessed sin,

pride, disobedience, the desecration of the Sabbath and the non-attendance at

the House of the Lord".¹⁶⁶ It is regularly recommended that one's motives be

¹⁶² Jeffreys, Healing..., 150f; Richards, Divine..., 22f; Parr, Divine..., 9; Parker, Divine..., 43f; Wiseowl ((Jan. 1996) 29) rejects the possibility that unconfessed sin can be a cause of illness on the basis that there is no "Scriptural evidence for such a statement"; Dye, Healing..., 189.

¹⁶³ An anonymous Pentecostal Mental Nurse in a series of 6 articles (SH, 1949, 1950) comments, "It would be foolish to assert that the sudden conversion of the world would abolish all insanity. Its roots lie deep in the structure of society and conversion is only the first step in learning to live as God meant us to live". Prayer, sympathy and wisdom are recommended ("Christ-and the Distressed Mind", (Feb. 2, 1950) 33ff); cf. Canty, G., "Biblical Foundations for Healing", Joint Elim/AOG Theological Conference, Swanwick (1995) 127; Dye, Healing..., 111.

¹⁶⁴ Parker, EBC..., 2.4; Allen ("Divine...", (Aug. 27, 1966) 554) suggests, "the harbouring of evil thoughts...evil motives"; Banks ("A Question...", 14)... "self-pity...hardness of heart", (Healing..., 125)... "a time of dryness in our spiritual experience"; Canty ("A Question...", 14)... "godlessness...self-glory... good works...neglect of the Word"; Richards (Divine..., 25) notes, "When Divine Healing takes place it carries with it a conviction of sin" offering Lk. 8:39, Jn. 9:38 and Acts 3:8, 16 as evidence; cf. Maddison, E., "Preventative Medicine", RT, (Nov. 24, 1983) 4f; AOG, "Our position...", 8; Parr (Divine..., 13-17, 33) quotes Num. 12:6-9, 2 Chron. 16:12, 1 Cor. 11:30; Wright, Our Quest..., 40, 146; Royal, F., "Healing in Relationships", Bread, 7 (May-June, 1980) 15.

¹⁶⁵ Brewster, The Approach..., 20; cf. Tee, "The Doctrine...", 203.

¹⁶⁶ Cove (Why..., 121-125) quotes Ps. 66:18, Is. 59:1f, Jn. 5:14, Jas. 5:15f as evidence; he (Why..., 61ff) suggests that continuation of illness may be due to "sins of the tongue", "disobedience", "self pity", partaking of "the Lord's Supper unworthily", pride, an "unforgiving spirit", "tobacco", "unpaid debts", lack of payment of tithes, an unwillingness to seek "the (baptism of) the Spirit", and "sexual matters"; he also states, "there are cases (adultery, abortion) in which the right to healing has been forfeited"; Canty (The Practice..., 181) speculates that it is possible to lose one's healing and provides a variety of potential reasons including a failure to testify for Christ (46ff), attendance at a church which disbelieves in miracles (43), failure to serve God (57f), being lukewarm (58f),

checked before requesting healing,¹⁶⁷ though this is rarely explained. Much of the above is not reflected in the Bible and none in the ministry of Jesus.

Parker¹⁶⁸ notes, "God distinctly promises health on condition of obedience" while Carter¹⁶⁹ contends for the view that healing "is promised upon repentance". Neither sufficiently clarify or support their claims from the Bible and neither concept is present in the teaching practice of Jesus concerning healing.

Within Pentecostalism, great responsibility has also been placed on those who pray for the sufferer, on the basis that the purer the lifestyle of the one praying, the more likely a healing will occur.¹⁷⁰ Thus, Brewster¹⁷¹ states those who pray for the sick "must be sanctified" which he defines in terms of rejection of "intoxicating liquors, gambling, smoking, the attending of theatres and dances".

Elements of the above views have been opposed by some throughout Pentecostal history; Gee,¹⁷² commenting on Trophimus, acknowledges that

backsliding (61), "not resisting Satan and evil spirits" (63-66), and "dabbling with the things of the world after they are healed" (61), concluding, "It is impossible to retain your healing if you do not walk with God" (62). This he confirms even though he describes divine healing as a promise that may be claimed (17).

¹⁶⁷ Banks, Healing Secrets, 116.

¹⁶⁸ Parker, Divine..., 7; cf. Cove, God's Covenant..., 11, 13f.

¹⁶⁹ Carter, J., "Healing in the Atonement of Christ", RT, (May 17, 1979) 4; Murray ("Pardon...", 226) advises, "In order to receive healing, it is necessary to begin by confession"; Gee (D., "The Donald Gee Column", VH, (Sept. 1951) 5) writes, "Confession of sins is a highway to health for the body"; cf. Linford, A Course..., 47.

¹⁷⁰ Linford, A Course..., 47.

¹⁷¹ Brewster, The Approach..., 15.

¹⁷² Gee, Trophimus..., 12f.

there is nothing to suggest that he was spiritually or morally in error as a result of which he advises, "If no apparent reasons for failure to receive supernatural healing are made clear to the conscience...we... leave the case in the hands of our Heavenly Father...without condemnation of ourselves or others". Similarly, Canty¹⁷³ writes, "It is wrong to suggest that some unknown state of soul can prevent healing and that it needs careful searching to discover it...sin is usually obvious". Gee¹⁷⁴ advocates an awareness that "consistently leaves a place for permitted sickness as a method of Divine love and wisdom for purposes of chastisement" though he notes this "has undoubtedly been much overdone".

Despite the above sanguine comments, much that has been written by Pentecostals concerning the relationship between sickness and sin has been speculative, unsubstantiated and is insupportable by Scripture. Most importantly, it is not reflected in the ministry of Jesus. The significance of this lies in the comparison many draw between the healing ministry of Jesus and his apparent delegated authority to believers. In the light of this stress on the latter, it is incongruous that such dissimilarity be demonstrated.

Sin was not an obstacle to the healing activity of Jesus. It was an irregular feature of the healing narratives; when it is suggested that sin may have been the cause of the illness, Jesus rejects such a view (Jn. 9:2f). The attempt by

¹⁷³ Canty, The Practice..., 179.

¹⁷⁴ Gee, Trophimus..., 12f.; cf. Banks (Divine..., 16) notes, "If one is being chastised by the Lord, he should know the reason"; Wright, "The Purpose...", 17; Tee, Healing..., 17; Hendy Morton, J., "Confession of Faults", EE, (July 28, 1962) 471, "The Confession of sin", EE, (Apr. 28, 1962) 265.

some Pentecostals to place the blame for the lack of healing on those who are ill and, in particular, on the basis of unconfessed sin appears to be the result of insistence on a belief that the ministry of Jesus may be emulated by believers today, any failure to do so being, by default, due to the unpreparedness of, or blockage caused by, the one needing to be restored. The emphasis on sin, by Pentecostals, suggests a different model is being anticipated, more akin to the teachings of Paul and James.

Prayer

Pentecostals have always affirmed the necessity of prayer in the context of a request for healing.¹⁷⁵ As a result of this emphasis, the Pentecostal Divine Healing Partnership based in Cheltenham was organised by Elim in 1968. It was initiated by the then Secretary General, Harold Greenway and Alex Tee.

A similar prayer network still exists in Elim organised by Rev. Frank Lavender on behalf of the Elim Executive with an emphasis on prayer for healing.

Prayer has been viewed as being so important that healing may not result if a prayer for healing is not offered¹⁷⁶ or if there is a fault in the prayer or in the attitude in which the prayer was offered.¹⁷⁷ Persistence¹⁷⁸ is sometimes viewed

¹⁷⁵ Redemption..., 730, 736; Elim Choruses, 323, 455, 631, 797, 888; Banks, Divine..., 9; a special “prayer call for cancer” was requested in the EE (Oct. 19, 1963) 665; Kay, W.K., “Assemblies of God: Distinctive Continuity and Distinctive Change”, Pentecostal Perspectives, (ed.) Warrington, K., Carlisle: Paternoster Press (1998) 60.

¹⁷⁶ Wright, Our Quest..., 158.

¹⁷⁷ Parker, Divine..., 47; Hoy, “Healing...”, 17; Cove, Why some..., 89.

¹⁷⁸ Parker, Divine..., 7f; Hoy, “Healing...”, 17; Banks, “A Question...”, 14; Canty, “Biblical Foundations...”, 127.

as being necessary, as is fasting.¹⁷⁹ The motifs of persistency and prayer in general however, are absent from the healings of Jesus and from his advice to his disciples in their healing missions.¹⁸⁰ Instead, as will be demonstrated, the healing narratives prove his unique authority to initiate healing authoritatively.

The name of Jesus

For Pentecostals, there is great significance in the use of the name of Jesus.¹⁸¹ One of the clearest emphases in Pentecostal prayer for healing is the incorporation of the name¹⁸² though the perceived reason for this on the part of many may be more due to the historical context of received practice than to an understanding of its biblical basis.¹⁸³ Jeffreys,¹⁸⁴ for example, states, "The servant may lay hands upon the sufferer, but it can only be efficacious when done in the name of the Lord", though he does not explain this comment. Canty¹⁸⁵ offers a rare alternative opinion in that he concludes that it is not necessary to incorporate the name of Jesus in a prayer for the sick in order for restoration to occur, though he does acknowledge that its mention may be of use "to let hearers understand our Christian authority". Dye¹⁸⁶ accurately

¹⁷⁹ Cove, Why some..., 94; Banks, Divine..., 10; Smith, "Divine...", 746.

¹⁸⁰ Mk 7:34 is not necessarily indicative of prayer for healing while Jn. 11:41f is specifically for the benefit of the onlookers.

¹⁸¹ In Elim Choruses, 64 choruses begin with the name of Jesus and many more include the name in the words of the song.

¹⁸² Darragh, In Defence..., 38, 70; Banks, Healing Revolution, 54, 85, 138, 148, 151; Dinsdale, "Ointment", 59f.

¹⁸³ Phillips ("Lord, teach...", 612) confirms its importance in prayer but does not explain why; cf. Willis, L.J., "Faith in His name", EE, (July 4, 1964) 429f.

¹⁸⁴ Jeffreys, The Miraculous..., 8; cf. Banks, Divine..., 7.

¹⁸⁵ private letter to the author (October 30, 1997).

¹⁸⁶ Prayer..., 12.

writes that the use of the name of Jesus is only appropriately incorporated if one's prayer "lines up perfectly with the will of God". However, of pertinence to our thesis is the fact that the guidelines offered by James (5:14ff) are being followed and not that reflected in Jesus.

Gradual healings

Gradual healings have always been accepted as valid by Pentecostals.¹⁸⁷

Cove¹⁸⁸ finds support in Mark 11:21, from which he argues, "The change was not revealed until the next day"; however, the text has nothing to do with healing. Dye¹⁸⁹ offers potential reasons for gradual healings, the main one of which relates to the possibility of pride on the part of believers who "ache for God's name to be honoured by the instant, dramatic, sensational". This alleged situation demands evidence before it is taken seriously; without it, it forms a serious and unsubstantiated slur against nameless believers.

Greenway¹⁹⁰ states that healings "should always be immediate". Similarly, Petts¹⁹¹ notes, "There is very little Biblical evidence for partial or delayed healings...and should hardly be considered to be normal".

¹⁸⁷ Hoover, "Divine...", 45; Duffield, G.P., Van Cleave, N.M., Foundations of Pentecostal Theology, Los Angeles:L.I.F.E. Bible College (1983) 411; Brewster, The Approach..., 8f; Jeffreys, Healing..., 155f, 172; Darragh, In Defence..., 46, 50, 55, 59, 108; Hathaway, The Gifts..., 47; Kingston, "Laying...", 474; Carter, Questions..., 12; Sawyer, "According...", 629; Smith, "A Question...", 5; Croucher, "Hard...", 5; Linford, A Course..., 49). Banks ("A Question...", 14) states, "limiting God to an instant miracle" can actually restrict a healing occurring.

¹⁸⁸ Cove, How to make..., 11, 73.

¹⁸⁹ Healing..., 192f.

¹⁹⁰ Greenway, The Person..., 10.

¹⁹¹ Petts, D., "Mattersey Hotline", Redemption, (Mar. 1991) 38.

The limited nature of instantaneous healings in contemporary Pentecostalism is indicative of the fact that a model other than that offered by Jesus is being followed by those with healing ministries today.

Anointing with oil

Anointing with oil has retained its place in the context of prayer for the sick in Pentecostal practice¹⁹² despite the fact that Parker¹⁹³ believed that the oil was not essential for it was only of value "to show that the healing is of the Holy Spirit". The oil is understood by most Pentecostals as symbolising the Holy Spirit.¹⁹⁴ Pentecostals have traditionally used oil, generally sparingly applied to the forehead.¹⁹⁵

Oil had ceremonial, cosmetic and dietary functions in Judaism.¹⁹⁶ Both the Old Testament¹⁹⁷ and other Jewish writings¹⁹⁸ also record the medicinal properties

¹⁹² Darragh, In Defence..., 16ff; Gee, D., "Anointing with Oil", VH, (June 1954) 7,9; an advertisement for anointing bottles was carried in EE (Jan. 28, 1961). Linford (A Course..., 46) states, "There is no Scriptural warrant for anointing unbelievers. Mark 6:13 is no exception to this as the mission was to Israel"; Banks, Healing Secrets, 86; Horton, The Gifts..., 114.

¹⁹³ Parker, EBC Correspondence..., 5; cf. Banks, Divine..., 12.

¹⁹⁴ Brewster, The Approach..., 16; Tee, "The Doctrine...", 202; Hoy, A.L., "The Spirit as Oil", Paraclete, 8.2 (1974) 18, 20; Linford, A Course..., 46; AOG, "Our position...", 12; Parker, Divine..., 6; Parr, Divine..., 33; Gee, "Anointing...", 9; Lancaster, J., "The Ordinances", Pentecostal Doctrine, (ed. Brewster) 91.

¹⁹⁵ Banks, Healing Secrets, 87; Linford, A Course..., 46.

¹⁹⁶ Ceremonial use Ex. 40:13; De Spec. Leg. 1. 134,141, 248; Hayden, D.R., "Calling the elders to pray", BS, 138 (1981) 268f.

Cosmetic use 2 Sam. 12:20; Dan. 10:2; Amos 6:16; Judg. 16:8.

Dietary use Ex. 29:2; 1 Kgs. 7:12; 2 Kgs. 18:32; Eccles. 9:7f.

¹⁹⁷ 2 Chron. 28:15; Isa. 1:6; Jer. 8:22; cf. Wiseman, D.J., "Medicine in the O.T. World" in Medicine and the Bible, (ed.) Palmer, B., Exeter:Paternoster Press

and was used to signify an infusion of the deity in whose name the person or object was anointed.²⁰⁴ This however, was redundant for Jesus as he was anointed by the Spirit in full measure. However, it is an appropriate element in the healing procedure of his followers. As such, it offers hope and encouragement to sufferers, reminding them that they are in the presence of God.²⁰⁵ The usage of oil in contemporary healing praxis is therefore of value; however, it is significant to note that the use of oil is not recorded as being present in the healing ministry of Jesus. As such, Classical Pentecostalism demonstrates that it does not accurately mirror the healing praxis of Jesus. To incorporate oil in a healing scenario indicates a recognition that one is engaging in a model that is distinct to that of Jesus and aligned to the practice encouraged by James (5:14-16). Such is the situation within Pentecostalism today.

Beneficial suffering

A developing perception within Classical Pentecostalism is that sickness may be of benefit to the sufferer concerned. This however, differs markedly from the healing ministry of Jesus; he did not comment positively on illness, rather

London: SPCK (1993) 19-25; Warrington, K., "Anointing with Oil", *EB*, 2 (1993) 5-22; Fleming, "The Biblical...", 406.

²⁰³ 1 Sam. 10:1, 6; 16:13; Isa. 61:1; Acts 10:38; 2 Cor. 1:21f; cf. Weisman, Z., "Anointing as a motif in the making of the Charismatic Kings", *Biblica* 57 (1976) 378-398, esp. 395ff; Alberton, M., "Un Sacrement pour les malades", *ETR*, 54 (1979) 107.

²⁰⁴ 1 Sam. 16:12f; Ps. 88 (89):21-25; Isa. 11:1-4; 1 Jn. 2:20, 27.

²⁰⁵ McManus, J., *The Healing-power of the Sacrament*, Hampshire: Redemptorist Pubs. (1984) 65; Gee, "Anointing...", 7.

choosing to remove it. At the same time, this highlights the tension within Pentecostalism where although healing is the expectation, sickness is often the experience.

Although Jaegar²⁰⁶ blandly suggests, "It is God's will to heal, not teach through the sickness", alternative views are more prominent in Pentecostalism.

Throughout Pentecostal history, there has always been a willingness to express ignorance concerning the reasons why some Christians remain ill after prayer for restoration.²⁰⁷ This itself establishes a major dissimilarity with the healing ministry of Jesus. Jones²⁰⁸ comments, "We have to accept that pain is God's mystery and there are some questions that we cannot give an answer to". Kingston²⁰⁹ acknowledges, "there are divine reasons...for the apparent non-recovery of some". This has developed into a recognition that, at times, illness may be viewed positively as a benefit for the believer.²¹⁰ In a limited but interesting empirical study of an AOG church, it was discovered that as well as demons and/or acts of disobedience and/or the Fall being understood as being causes of illness, many believers recognised that "theistic theories" were also to be borne in mind whereby God was viewed as bringing the sufferer into a closer relationship with him through the suffering.²¹¹ Smith²¹² makes an attempt

²⁰⁶ Jaegar, E., "Get well soon", Direction, (Nov. 1990) 33.

²⁰⁷ Tee, Healing..., 9f; Richards, Divine..., 22; Banks, "Notes on Healing", Bread, 7 (May-June, 1980) 21.

²⁰⁸ Jones, D., "A God of Love: A World of Pain", Redemption, (April 1989) 7; cf. Gee, Trophimus..., 29f.; Squire, The Healing..., 20; Adams, Stephen..., 52.

²⁰⁹ Kingston, Fulness..., 45; cf. "Laying...", 474 Linford, A Course..., 49.

²¹⁰ Palmertree, D.M., "The Christian and Suffering", EE, (Aug. 24, 1963) 532; Jeffreys, Healing..., 167; Brewster, The Approach..., 19.

²¹¹ Allen, G., Wallis, R., "Pentecostals as a Medical Minority", Marginal Medicine, (eds.) Wallis, R., Morely, P., London:Peter Owen (1976) 110-137

in this direction in his analysis of suffering as being "something which will lead us closer to the Saviour". Similarly, Hacking²¹³ advises the unhealed to "ask if there is any further lesson to be learned". Richards²¹⁴ states of Timothy, Paul (Gal. 4:13), Trophimus and Epaphroditus, "They were granted to be preserved in their sickness...the exception to the rule...probably to teach some divine lesson".

Parker²¹⁵ states, "God uses sickness...for His glory to keep His people humble and obedient". Wright²¹⁶ acknowledges, "God converts our affliction into a seat of learning" noting, "There are some things we can learn no other way", including God's peace and comfort and a sense of our own mortality.

Bemrose²¹⁷ notes, "Some folk working in close co-operation with God...exploit it as a way of bringing glory to God". Wright²¹⁸ views the experience recorded in Galatians 4:13ff as proof that Paul's physical affliction actually "accomplished God's will" and a church was established as a result. Hicks²¹⁹ speaking of his wife, writes, "God in his sovereign love had decided to heal Joyce in her spirit,

(esp. 115, 118).

²¹² Smith, P., "Suffering-God's Teacher", EE, (Nov. 1986) 7; cf. Munday, K., "A Ministry to the Unhealed", RT, (March 1988) 5f.

²¹³ Hacking, W., "The Divine Healing Column", RT, (July 9, 1981) 10; cf. Cove, G., Fiery Furnace Adventures, Leominster: Orphan Printing (n.d.) 5-11; Dye, Healing..., 110.

²¹⁴ Richards, Divine..., 24; cf. Barclift, "Why some...", 16; Parr, Divine..., 37f.

²¹⁵ Parker, Divine..., 44.

²¹⁶ Wright, "The Purpose...", 16; cf. Tada, J.T., "Joni - A woman for all seasons", Redemption, (Oct. 1990) 11.

²¹⁷ Bemrose, "Coping...", 13; cf. Wright, "The Purpose...", 17; contra Canty, "Biblical...", 127.

²¹⁸ Wright, "The Purpose...", 17.

²¹⁹ Hicks, R., "Healing, Death and God's Sovereign Love", Redemption, (April 1991) 38f.

not in her body and take her to be with him...sovereign love says 'God gives the best'".

An assessment of current Pentecostalism would suggest an increasing alliance with the latter views.²²⁰ A testimony of a blind person who was not healed was recorded in Redemption Tidings.²²¹ A similar account, but of a young married mother who is confined to a wheelchair as a result of having contracted polio as a child, was presented in Bread.²²²

Thus, sickness is viewed as a potential ally to believers and a useful instrument in the hands of God for their benefit. However, the perception that Jesus is viewed unconditionally as the healer of all our illnesses is thus precluded and any paradigmatic role is to be questioned for, according to the Gospels, he did not teach that illness was potentially beneficial for the sufferer. The recognition that benefit is derived by the believer as a result of illness or disability is a significant shift away from a belief that Jesus has apparently delegated to believers the authority to excise all sickness from the life experience of the believer. It further undermines the idea that Jesus' healing

²²⁰ Hollenweger (The Pentecostals, 358) traces this move within the AOG though also notes that some cling to the older view. An article, entitled "Divine Health" by C. Parham, an early twentieth century Pentecostal pioneer, republished in RT in 1981 in which he stated "As long as you have any sickness in you, you have some of the smudge of Hell on you" (6) and "How can the body be holy with a lot of rotten disease in it, the spew of Hell?" was severely criticised in subsequent letters (Mar. 19, Apr. 2, 1981). The writer who offered the letter printed on May 30, 1981 was particularly incensed by Parham's suggestion that the sick "are a disgrace to the Church".

²²¹ RT, (Oct. 22, 1981) 16. In an earlier edition (Sept. 17, 1981), information was printed referring to the work of the Disabled Christian's Fellowship.

²²² "New Life in a wheel chair", Bread, 18 (Mar.-Apr. 1982) 9.

ministry is a model to be emulated by believers, given that Jesus healed all who came to him, never recommending that anyone identify potential benefits resulting from their sickness.

Conclusion

There are similarities between Pentecostal healing praxis and that of Jesus, but there are also significant dissimilarities. Likewise, although some common terms and concepts are referred to, their significance differs markedly in each context. The belief that Jesus' ministry acts as a model for future believers has been assumed by many Pentecostals and alternative opinions have not been carefully considered. The differences between the healing ministry of Jesus and that of contemporary Pentecostal believers are sufficient to question the assertion that the latter are emulating, or even able to emulate, the ministry of Jesus. The apparent paradigmatic function of Jesus' healings is unproven and it is more germane to identify Jesus' mission as uniquely phenomenological. The fact that there are elements in contemporary Pentecostal healing praxis that are not reflected in the ministry of Jesus again indicates that other models are being followed.

The role of Jesus in the healing praxis and teaching of Kenneth Hagin

Introduction

Kenneth Hagin (1917-) represents and is widely accepted as the father of the Word of Faith Ministries.²²³ Because of the impact of his teaching concerning healing,²²⁴ with its attendant reactions,²²⁵ it is appropriate to incorporate a

²²³ Others who would have similar beliefs include Kenneth Copeland, Kenneth Hagin Jr., Fred Price, Charles Capps, Norvel Hayes, Marilyn Hickey, Robert Tilton, Jerry Savelle, Bob and Marte Tilton, John Osteen, Charles and Frances Hunter; cf. Savelle, J., Sharing Jesus Effectively. A Handbook on Successful Soul-Winning, Tulsa:Harrison House (1982) 14; Hagin, K. Jr., "Trend Toward Faith Movement", Charisma, (August, 1985) 67; Hollinger, D., "Enjoying God Forever: An Historical/Sociological Profile of the Health and Wealth Gospel", TJ, 9.2 (1988) 131-149; a UK exponent is Ian Andrews, Building a People of Power, Waco:Word (1988).

²²⁴ McConnell, D., A Different Gospel, Peabody:Hendrickson (1988) 7f, According to Hagin (<http://www.rhema.org/khm.htm>), with the writings of his son, Kenneth Hagin Jr., they have distributed 53 million books with 58000 tapes being distributed every month.

²²⁵ Burge, G.M., "Problems in the Healing Ministries within the Charismatic Context", SPS Conference Papers (1983); Simmons, D.H., "Hagin-Heretic or Herald of God? A Theological and Historical Analysis of Kenneth E. Hagin's claim to be a prophet", unpubl. MA, Oral Roberts University (1985); Kantzer, K.S., "The Cut-Rate Grace of a Health and Wealth Gospel", CT, 29.9 (June 4, 1985) 14f; Matta, J.A., The Born Again Jesus of the Word Faith Teaching, Fullerton: Spirit of Truth Ministry (1987); Moo, D.J., "Divine Healing in the Health and Wealth Gospel", TJ, 9.2 (1988) 191ff; Neuman, H.T., "Cultic Origins of Word-Faith Theology within the Charismatic Movement", Pneuma, 12.1 (1990) 32-55; Synan, V., "The Faith of Kenneth E. Hagin", Charisma and Christian Life, (June 1990) 65f; Knight, H.H.III., "God's Faithfulness and God's Freedom: A Comparison of Contemporary Theologies of Healing", JPT, 2 (1993) 69ff; Hanegraaf, H.H., "What's wrong with the Faith Movement-Part One: E.W. Kenyon and the Twelve Apostles of Another Gospel", CRJ, (Winter 1993) 16ff; Frame, R.L., "Critics claim 'Word-Faith is cultic'", CT, 38.85 (1994) 24; Smail, T., Walker, A., Wright, N., "'Revelation Knowledge' and Knowledge

presentation of his beliefs and practices, especially as they are also based on the belief that Jesus acted paradigmatically with regard to healing and delegated his authority to believers.

An analysis of his teaching will adopt the following structure: An assessment will be undertaken of his major beliefs that Jesus is a paradigm and promise bearer concerning healing, his power being available to all believers.

Following this, other aspects of his praxis and teaching will be examined which demonstrate that the former views are compromised.

Jesus the paradigmatic healer

His belief that Jesus may be emulated by believers in healing the sick is based on a number of foundational precepts, enunciated below.

Jesus healed out of compassion; he has not changed

He stresses the compassion of Jesus as a major reason for his healing the sick when he was on earth. He further assumes that this has not changed and that therefore his healing authority is to be anticipated in the lives of believers.²²⁶

of Revelation: The Faith Movement and the Question of Heresy”, JPT, 5 (1996) 57-77; Kim, S-B., “A Bed of Roses or a bed of Thorns”, ERT, 20.1 (1996) 17-19.

²²⁶ Hagin, K.E., The Art Of Intercession, Tulsa:KHM (1980) 40f...providing Matt. 14:14; 20:34; Mk. 1:40f; Jn. 11:33ff; Hagin, K.E., The Name Of Jesus, Tulsa:KHM (1980) 108.

However, he does not clarify this; the corollary, namely that unanswered prayer for restoration implies a lack of compassion, is not addressed. He also appears oblivious to the fact that the compassion of Jesus is rarely mentioned in the Gospels as a motive for healings.

Jesus' death is the guarantee that his healing ministry is to be perpetuated

His belief that the healing authority of Jesus is delegated by him to believers is also based on his interpretation of 1 Peter 2:24, in which he offers his opinion that "healing is in His Redemptive Plan", particularly emphasising the relevance of the Petrine statements to physical suffering.²²⁷ Thus, he writes, "He not only bore your sins, but He bore your sicknesses",²²⁸ claiming, "Healing is in the Atonement. Healing is ours".²²⁹

Referring to the past tense used in 1 Peter 2:24 ("you were healed"), he argues that healing belongs to the Christian and simply needs to be

²²⁷ Hagin, K.E., Seven Things You Should Know About Divine Healing, Tulsa:KHM (1979) 7, 9; cf. Hagin, K.E., Knowing What Belongs To Us, Tulsa:KHM (1989) 7ff.

²²⁸ Hagin, K.E., What To Do When Faith Seems Weak And Victory Lost, Tulsa:KHM (1979) 122; cf. Hagin, K.E., Bible Prayer Study Course, Tulsa:KHM (n.d.) 154; Hagin, K.E., "Calling Those Things That Are Not", (KHFLAC) Knutsford: FB (n.d.).

²²⁹ The Art..., 28; cf. Hagin, K.E., Healing: God At Work, Tulsa:KHM (n.d.) 11ff; Hagin, K.E., Bible Faith Study Course, Tulsa:KHM (1974) 21; Hagin, K.E., El Shaddai, Tulsa:KHM (1980) 1, 9, 21, 33f; Hagin, K.E., Must Christians Suffer?, Tulsa:KHM (1982) 2; Seven..., 21; Hagin, K.E., "Healing: The Father's Provision", WF, (Aug. 1977) 9.

appropriated.²³⁰ Similarly, he writes, "In the mind of God, we're already healed",²³¹ stating, "If we were healed, then / was healed. And if I was healed, then I *am* healed now".²³² It is the context however that determines the meaning of the term ἰαομαι (I heal) and the context of the word's use in 1 Peter 2:24 indicates a meaning more related to restoration and particularly to the forgiveness of sins and not the healing of the body.²³³

Jesus came to overcome the Devil; sickness is of the Devil;

Jesus healed the sick; therefore, healing is anticipated today

It is inconceivable to Hagin that the work of Jesus in overcoming the work of the Devil should not continue through the ministry of believers. Thus, he writes, "Healing belongs to you because sickness is of the enemy...sickness is a curse and Christ has redeemed you from the curse of the Law".²³⁴ Since

²³⁰ Bible Faith..., 22f, 29, 36; cf. Hagin, K.E., God's Medicine, Tulsa:KHM (1979)12f; Hagin, K.E., "It is God's will to heal you", (audio-cassette) Knutsford:KHM (n.d.); Healing: God..., 8, 26-32.

²³¹ Hagin, K.E., How To Keep Your Healing, Tulsa:KHM (1980) 7; cf. Hagin, K.E., "Healing is not always instant", (audio-cassette) (n.d.).

²³² Knowing..., 10 (italics his).

²³³ In the NT, it is generally used to refer to physical healing (Matt. 8:13; 15:28; Mk. 5:29; Lk. 5:17; 6:17; Jn. 4:47; 5:13; Acts 10:38) though where the context is not of sickness, the meaning of "restore" is more applicable (Matt. 13:15; Jn. 12:40; Acts 28:27; Heb. 12:13; 1 Pet. 2:24); in the LXX, it is used in the context of physical healing (Gen. 20:17; Lev. 14:48; Num. 12:13; Deut. 28:27, 35) and of "repair", "restore" (1 Kings 18:32; 2 Chron. 7:14; Ps. 6:2) and specifically of the forgiveness of sins (Deut. 30:3; 2 Chron. 30:20 cf. Sir. 21:3; Test. Zeb., 9:8); such breadth of meaning is noted in Josephus (Ant. 2.119: 7.294; 9.105) and Philo (physical healing...De Con. Ling., 22; spiritual healing...Leg. All., 3. 118; forgiveness...Quo Det. Pot. ins. sol., 146). It is thus important to recognise the contextual influence in determining the most appropriate translation.

²³⁴ Don't..., 23.

sickness comes from Satan,²³⁵ it is to be rejected by the believer as being inappropriate to him/her, offering Luke 13:16,²³⁶ John 10:10²³⁷ Acts 10:38²³⁸ and 1 John 3:8 as evidence.²³⁹ Thus, he advocates, "The believer is to recognise that any symptoms of illness he is aware of have been applied to him/her by Satan and the way to remove them is to resist him".²⁴⁰ He favourably quotes a minister whose thirteen year old daughter died some years previously. His reaction to that event was, "If we had known then what we know now, she would not have died".²⁴¹ Indeed, he notes that, on the basis of this knowledge, in his twelve years of pastoral ministry, he did not bury any of his church members.²⁴²

However, it is to be noted that Jesus healed primarily not to overcome the work of the Devil but to establish the Kingdom and to demonstrate its presence. Of greater significance is the fact that one of Hagin's basic premises, that sickness is caused or sent by the Devil, is flawed. Outside the Synoptics, the role of the Devil in initiating sickness is muted. It is possible that there may be a co-agency between God and the Devil reflected in 2 Corinthians 12:9ff resulting in Paul's thorn in the flesh, though the identification of that as a

²³⁵ Hagin, K.E., "Where does Sickness come from?", (audio-cassette) Knutsford:FB (n.d.); Hagin, K.E., Faith Food For Spring, Tulsa:KHM (1978) 72f.

²³⁶ Don't..., 21.

²³⁷ Hagin, K.E., "Healings can be obtained", (audio-cassette) Knutsford:KHM (n.d.).

²³⁸ Seven..., 13f; Don't..., 21.

²³⁹ Bible Prayer..., 111.

²⁴⁰ Bible Faith..., 92.

²⁴¹ Don't..., 31.

²⁴² Know the Difference.

physical infirmity is uncertain. Other than this weak base, the Devil has no place in the origin of illness in most of the writings of the New Testament. It is only in the Synoptics that the Devil may have a part to play in sickness, though here it is also limited.²⁴³ In only one exorcism is there reference to an attendant sickness (dumbness, Mt. 9:32ff//s; Mk. 9:17ff).

It is uncertain that the illnesses of Peter's mother-in-law (Matt. 8:14f//s) and the woman with a "spirit of infirmity" (Lk. 13:11ff) are initiated by demons. Even if the latter is reflective of a diabolic influence, it is a rare example in the Gospel records and only located in Luke. The reference to Jesus "healing all who were oppressed by the devil" (Acts 10:38) needs careful analysis. It is not to be interpreted to mean that the Devil caused all illness in first century Palestine. Such would undermine the sovereign role of God in these matters as presented in the Old Testament; Luke does not elsewhere attribute all illness to the Devil in his writings. It is rather to be understood as an apologetic by Peter for Christ. It is of significance to note that the words following this statement in Acts 10:38 are "for God was with him" while the introductory phrase is "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power". The importance of this verse to Luke is not to indicate the role of the Devil in the initiating of sickness. Rather, it is to centralise attention

²⁴³ Green (J.B., The Gospel of Luke, Grand Rapids:Eerdmans (1997) 237) suggests of the leper referred to in Matthew 8:2-4 (and parallels), "This man was released from a condition whose basis was diabolic". He argues his case cogently, noting that the term "ἀπερχομαι", to describe the removal of the illness is elsewhere used by Luke of demons being removed (4:35, 41 (ἐξέρχομαι); 8:31). However, Luke makes no attempt to clearly identify a demonic influence in his account.

on the person of Jesus who has resident within him all the power needed to fulfil the prophecy recorded in Luke 4:18f. To claim from this limited basis that the Devil is behind all sickness is not reflecting the teaching of the New Testament.²⁴⁴

The role of personal visions

One of the distinctive elements that has been the source of much of Hagin's teaching and ministry concerning healing is the catalogue of visions and personal discussions that he claims to have had with Jesus.²⁴⁵ The visions provide significant proof for his belief that Jesus intended his healing ministry to be understood as a paradigm. In one of these, for example, he describes a commission he apparently received from Jesus to lay hands on the sick with the promise that they would recover. He was told by Jesus, who apparently

²⁴⁴ This issue is comprehensively explored in Thomas, J.C., The Devil, Disease and Deliverance: Origins of illness in New Testament Thought, Sheffield:Sheffield Academic Press (1998); he (197-204, 221-226) explores the possibility of demons afflicting people with illness concluding that on only two occasions (Mt. 8:14f//s; Lk. 13:10-17) is there the possibility of a demonically initiated illness, though he accurately notes the restoration is not presented in terms of an exorcism. Thomas overstates the case with regard to the latter references; nevertheless, they confirm the authority of Jesus to deal with diabolic powers.

²⁴⁵ Hagin, "A Vision...", 10ff. In this, he describes Jesus informing him, "we have now moved into the era of the miraculous". He also claims that Jesus told him that Satan had tried to destroy his life many times but Jesus had protected him, the reason being, "I have given thee a special anointing to pray for the sick". In I Believe in Visions, (Hagin, K.E., Old Tappan:Revell (1972) 42ff), he also claims (53) to have had a vision in which Jesus purportedly said, "The Church will do greater things than even the early church did" and to have visited hell (5); he describes a vision he had in 1950 (Hagin, K.E., The Glory Of God, Tulsa:KHM (1987) 44f) where Jesus apparently spoke to him from the top of a tent and took him through the air providing visions of heaven and hell; cf. "Healing can be lost", (audio-cassette) Knutsford:KHM (n.d.).

touched his hand with his finger, that he was to pray for people, placing his hands on either side of the sufferer. If the person being prayed for had faith that s/he would be healed, that would "activate the manifestation of healing".²⁴⁶ On the same occasion, he was apparently provided with the ability to discern whether a sickness was demonically initiated by the presence of a fire (or an anointing²⁴⁷) that would be passed from one of his hands to the other. When the fire left his hands and entered the body of the sufferer, s/he would be healed.²⁴⁸ In this, he views himself directly in a line of continuity from Jesus, the power of the latter being transmitted to him.

He recommends the laying on of hands with regard to the sick but advises, "don't lay hands on someone and say if it be the Lord's will. Lay your hands on them and claim their deliverance in the Name of Jesus".²⁴⁹ He estimates its significance as being higher than prayer, noting that Jesus "laid hands on the sick, but He never prayed for them".²⁵⁰ Referring to Mark 6:5, he comments "It doesn't say He *wouldn't* do mighty works in Nazareth; it says He *couldn't*. It seems therefore that the laying on of hands will work when nothing else will".²⁵¹ This indicates a mechanistic approach to healing that is remote from the practice of Jesus. He describes the reason for his belief in this method as resulting from a vision that he received in 1950 in which he was told "the

²⁴⁶ Hagin, K.E., "Physical Healing through the Spirit", (audio-cassette) Knutsford:FB (n.d.).

²⁴⁷ "Physical...".

²⁴⁸ I Believe..., 45ff.

²⁴⁹ ibid, 31; cf. Seven Things..., 49f; Hagin, K.E., Laying On Of Hands, Tulsa:KHM (1980) 30.

²⁵⁰ Bible Prayer..., 116.

²⁵¹ ibid, 13.

bolder I am about it, the more results I will have", though inexplicably, the release of power is dependent on the recipient believing it has validity.²⁵² He describes the significance of the laying on of hands of the sick as the opportunity to "transmit God's healing power".²⁵³

Hagin also claims support for his interpretations of biblical texts as a result of revelations from Jesus. Thus, he describes Jesus appearing to him and explaining that Matthew 18:16 provides the evidence that believers may claim their healing from God as a result of their having been given the healing authority that belongs to Jesus.²⁵⁴ However, the context of the latter passage is related to disputes among believers, bearing no relationship to the granting of promises nor to the issue of healing.

This emphasis on visions is to be borne in mind when considering the nature and content of his teaching and practice, especially because not all of the apparent revelations have proven to be accurate.²⁵⁵ The dependency on such visions results in contradictions²⁵⁶ as well as inadequate interpretations of

²⁵² The Art..., 31.

²⁵³ Laying..., 30.

²⁵⁴ How to write..., 20f.

²⁵⁵ A prophecy he gave (Oct. 12, 1997 at St. Louis Family Church, Minnesota) indicated that a revival of healings and other miracles would occur in the October of that year and that it would spread through the nation. It didn't happen. For the full text, see <http://www.rhema.org/khm.htm>.

²⁵⁶ He describes an occasion (The Art..., 125) when he prayed for his father-in-law who was seriously ill. As he prayed for his healing, he records, "The Lord plainly said to me, 'No, don't do it...Let him alone and let him die'". However, elsewhere, he states that believers should not die unhealed of any illness (Bible Prayer..., 11f) whilst this also contradicts another claim (Bible Prayer..., 21) that in 29 years, he has never had a prayer request refused.

biblical texts.²⁵⁷ His interpretation of the Bible is not gained through sound exegesis but is filtered through revelation knowledge.²⁵⁸ In particular, as has been demonstrated, the visions are a major source for his inadequate Christology.

Jesus promised that believers would emulate him

A fundamental emphasis in the beliefs of Hagin is that Jesus has granted significant healing power to the believer which s/he is encouraged to exercise.²⁵⁹ Thus, he states, "When Christ ascended, He transferred His authority to the Church",²⁶⁰ commenting on the promise offered by Jesus in Mark 11:23, 24, "There's not a 'but' in there - so don't add one".²⁶¹ He views Matthew 18:18-20 as an example of the authority of Jesus being delegated to believers and recounts incidents of healing resulting from an application of this

²⁵⁷ On 2 occasions, the Lord allegedly informed him that a non-Christian would not be healed as punishment for an evil life, instead being "turned over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus". However, there is no suggestion that 1 Cor. 5:5 relates to non-believers; neither should "flesh" be understood to refer to the body but a fleshly lifestyle, the characteristic Pauline use; finally, the Bible nowhere substantiates the possibility of salvation via death without prior repentance (What to do..., 46).

²⁵⁸ Smail et al, "Revelation...", 57ff. Thus, Hagin describes his ability to look at people and ascertain what they were doing during the days before (Hagin, K.E., "God called me to the Ministry of a Prophet", HOF, (June 1964) 9.

²⁵⁹ The Believer's..., 15-69...quoting Matt. 28:18; Lk. 10:19; Jn. 16:23f; Eph. 2:6f; Hagin, K.E. Authority of the Believer, KHM:Tulsa (1980) 5-31; What To..., 122f; The Art..., 27; Bible Prayer..., 167; Bible Faith..., 9; Hagin, K.E., Don't Blame God, Tulsa:KHM (1979) 2-7.

²⁶⁰ The Believer's..., 11; he views Romans 4:17, "God called those things that be not" (KJV) (and Ephesians 1:4) as paradigmatic for the believer with regard to healing, calling into being the healing that previously had not existed ("Calling...").

²⁶¹ What To Do..., 118; cf. Bible Prayer..., 46, 49, 50, 81.

principle.²⁶² He claims that even though faith was limited and doubt was felt on some of these occasions, the issues that were agreed upon by at least two people came to pass.²⁶³ As a result of this agreeing together, he writes, "Heaven will back us up in what we do on earth".²⁶⁴ The egocentric nature of the transaction is again apparent, the explicit deduction being that God obeys the agreed propositional request of at least two believers. He also claims that Jesus told him "many times you will see me. Occasionally, I will open the eyes of someone in the audience and they will say, 'Why I saw Jesus standing by that man as he prayed for the sick'".²⁶⁵ This affirms his assumption that the healing role of Jesus has been transferred to him.

Hagin's belief that Jesus functions as a paradigm for believers with regard to healing is also based on his perception of the incarnate Jesus. Jesus is perceived as being so closely related to believers that they are able to do all he did.²⁶⁶ He assumes this level of authority on the part of the believer on the basis of his belief concerning the complete identification of the believer with Christ. He thus claims, "There is a real incarnation in the new birth" leading to his assumption that "we're Christ!". Indeed, in the same section, he writes, "The Church has not yet realised that we are Christ. When we do, we'll start doing the work we're supposed to do".²⁶⁷ The conclusion developed is that

²⁶² Seven..., 41.

²⁶³ Bible Prayer..., 33, 36-41; Bible Faith..., 14f.

²⁶⁴ Prevailing..., 25; cf. What To..., 76, 84, 87.

²⁶⁵ Hagin, K.E., "A Vision of the End-time and God's Message to me", VH, (Sept. 1953) 10f.

²⁶⁶ Hagin, K.E., Zoe: The God-Kind of Life, Tulsa:KHM (1981) 41f.

²⁶⁷ The Name..., 105.

healing for the believer is not granted as a result of the present involvement of Jesus in healing power but on the basis of the elevation of the believer to a position co-equal with Jesus.²⁶⁸ In effect, Jesus is redundant to contemporary healing in any sense other than his being the one who achieved it in the past for the believer to access the same power in the present.

Describing a vision that he had of meeting Jesus that lasted for more than an hour, he states that Jesus said to him, "The primary way that I ministered was with the tangible anointing of healing power".²⁶⁹ Thus, he advises that people should not wait for Jesus but take the initiative themselves.²⁷⁰ He further claims that it is wisest not to wait for "the intervention of divine sovereignty" for although "God may see fit to intervene...He may not".²⁷¹

His thought progression is as follows: As a result of sin in the world, Adam, who "was the god of this world...sold out to Satan and Satan became god".²⁷² He claims, prior to this, that originally, man "was created on terms of equality with God and could stand in God's presence without any consciousness of inferiority".²⁷³ In the process of salvation, Jesus, during the crucifixion, died spiritually and was made "synonymous with Satan",²⁷⁴ the cross being "a place of defeat",²⁷⁵ Jesus being described, in the context of Psalm 22:6, as "the

²⁶⁸ Hagin, K.E., "Know the Difference", (audio-cassette) Knutsford:KHM (n.d.).

²⁶⁹ Hagin, K.E., Hear And Be Healed, Tulsa:KHM (1979) 6.

²⁷⁰ "Know...".

²⁷¹ Hagin, K.E., "Step up to God's Best", WF, (Sept. 1973) 2f.

²⁷² Zoe..., 47 (underlining original).

²⁷³ *ibid*, 35.

²⁷⁴ Hagin, K.E., "Christ our Substitute", WF, (March, 1975) 2.

²⁷⁵ Hagin, K.E., The Believer's Authority, Tulsa:KHM (1984) 16.

worm”.²⁷⁶ After three days and nights in Hell, during which Jesus suffered as a sinner, the Father justified Jesus and, after a great battle, Jesus rose from the dead.²⁷⁷ During that period, he became identified with sin and was born again. As a result of this, Hagin claims that a legal process has been initiated on the basis of which, believers may claim, by right, that which Satan has lost and which Jesus has gained. This Ebionite view results in the belief that the incarnation of Jesus and the spiritual birth of the believer are to be viewed as identical in terms of a reception of authority.

Thus, he writes, “Not even Jesus Christ has any better standing with God than you and I do”,²⁷⁸ noting, “the believer is as much an incarnation as was Jesus of Nazareth”.²⁷⁹ Similarly, he views the reference to the righteous man who prays effectively in James 5:16 as designating all Christians who “have the same righteousness that Jesus has”.²⁸⁰ Furthermore, he writes, “Paul claims the individual member of the body of Christ, ‘Christ’...that’s who we are, we’re Christ”.²⁸¹ The identification that “we are Christ” is a central thesis on which he bases his belief that Jesus’ healing authority may be harnessed by believers.²⁸² He chooses not to offer any texts to support this and fails to understand the symbolism present in Paul’s terminological concepts.

²⁷⁶ “Christ...”, 1.

²⁷⁷ *ibid*, 7.

²⁷⁸ *Zoe...*, 62.

²⁷⁹ Hagin, K.E., “The Humanity and Deity of Jesus”, *WF*, (Dec., 1973) 3.

²⁸⁰ *Bible Prayer...*, 144; cf. *Bible Faith...*, 70f, 84.

²⁸¹ *Zoe...*, 41.

²⁸² *The Name*, 66ff; *Zoe...*, 41; *Intercession...*, 35; *Authority...*, ch. 2.

However, he develops his view by claiming that not only may believers function as did Jesus, but they may supersede him. Thus, he writes, "Adam committed high treason and sold out to Satan...God cannot legally and justly move in and take away that dominion from the devil...God cannot do anything unless somebody down here asks Him".²⁸³ An extension of this is that "Christ can't get along without us, because the work of Christ and God is carried out through the Body".²⁸⁴ As a consequence of this egocentrism, he notes, **"Whether or not your prayer is answered depends on you more than it does on God"**, referring to John 15:7 as evidence that the believer can claim healing.²⁸⁵ Thus, he describes healing as that which already "belongs" to the believer.²⁸⁶

There are a number of problems with his views. He inflates the authority of the believer, undervalues the deity of Jesus, confuses the status, role and authority of believers with that of Jesus and bases his beliefs on unbiblical premises. The result is that believers apparently usurp God. Added to this is the recognition that visions play an inappropriately high part in affirming this belief.

He recounts a vision he apparently had in which Jesus, on three occasions, visited a dying missionary in order to heal him. However, because the latter said, "I can't receive my healing", Jesus turned away saying, "see, I've come to

²⁸³ The Art..., 3; cf. The Believer's..., 19f.

²⁸⁴ The Believer's..., 28; cf. Hagin, K.E., "Ingredients of the Harvest", BVV, (Feb. 1998) 22.

²⁸⁵ What To..., 119 (bold original).

²⁸⁶ How to Keep..., 2; Knowing..., 6f; Hagin, K.E., How to write Your Own Ticket With God, Tulsa:FLP (1979) 18.

heal him and he won't let me".²⁸⁷ An unhealthy dualism is thus continually promulgated in which believers take the place of Jesus and function in a cosmic war against Satan. However, this is a war in which the divine opponent of Satan hands over complete responsibility for the warfare to believers who may or may not choose to engage the enemy in conflict. Nowhere does the Bible indicate that such an action will occur. Indeed, the opposite is maintained in that Jesus is described as functioning in and through his Church.²⁸⁸

Jesus depended on the Holy Spirit as do believers

Hagin views Jesus as a model for the believer in that he believes Jesus healed the sick "through the manifestation of the gifts of healing" stating, "He never healed anyone until He was anointed with the Holy Ghost and power".²⁸⁹ So desirous is he of presenting Jesus as the paradigm for all believers that he describes Jesus telling him, "that He (Jesus) ministered on earth primarily as a prophet of the Old Covenant anointed by the Holy Spirit", the implication being that everything Jesus did is possible for believers for they can also benefit from the same power of the Holy Spirit.²⁹⁰

On the basis of the above, he offers a reason for the limited success in Nazareth recorded in Mark 6:5, suggesting it was due to the fact that "the Holy

²⁸⁷ The Art..., 31.

²⁸⁸ Jn. 17:22f, 26; Rom. 15:18; 2 Cor. 12:9.

²⁸⁹ Bible Prayer..., 82.

²⁹⁰ Hear..., 9.

Spirit didn't manifest Himself". As a result of this, he records Jesus saying to him, "I couldn't do anything. Instead of proving anything, I got run out of town".²⁹¹ As for those who were healed, he states that Jesus informed him, "I only managed to get a few people healed in my hometown. And the few that did get healed didn't have much wrong with them".²⁹² Presumably, the latter information is intended to act as an explanation for their being healed apparently without the manifestation of the Holy Spirit in the life of Jesus in healing power, though how they were healed is not explained. Neither does he comment on his ability to deduce the severity of their sickness, though he records Jesus guiding him to the conclusion that the number healed was about six to eight.²⁹³ Instead of the lack of healing being presented as due to unbelief, as the text records, he deduces that it was due to the lack of a manifestation of the Holy Spirit's power in Jesus. The corollary is that when the Holy Spirit is present, Jesus functions in power; such potential is also available to the believer. The consequence of his view enables him to write, "Even though Jesus was the Son of God, and divine blood (sic) flowed through His veins, yet *He was ministering on the earth as a human being* - a prophet anointed with the Holy Spirit".²⁹⁴ This issue will be discussed later at length. At this stage, it is pertinent to note its foundational role in his belief structure.

²⁹¹ ibid, 13; he describes Jesus informing him that he wanted "to make good in his hometown" but that he failed (14f). He records Jesus telling him concerning his ministry at Nazareth (Luke 4:14ff) "those that would listen, I could get healed. But if they wouldn't *hear* Me, I couldn't get them healed" (Hear..., 17). The devaluing of the authority of the Lord is not commented on nor is biblical support offered for his view.

²⁹² ibid, 12.

²⁹³ "Physical...".

²⁹⁴ Hear..., 14 (italics his).

That which he fails to recognise is the distinctive Messianic role of Jesus as contrasted to the ministry of believers. Also, his perception that the Spirit's role in Jesus was only for empowering is flawed. While the former view will be stressed, the latter is to be critiqued.

Conclusion

His reliance on his visions, his disregard of the biblical evidence, his contradictory statements and his unwillingness to interact with other views undermine the credibility of his beliefs concerning the healing authority of Jesus being available for the believer. Poor exegesis, faulty logic and an anthropocentric emphasis²⁹⁵ fatally weaken his argument that the healing authority of Jesus has been delegated to believers. Finally, his own description concerning his allergies and ulcers²⁹⁶ affects his belief system in which he recommends that healing be claimed.

It is also to be noted that in projecting Jesus the healer as the paradigm for believers, it is at the expense of the instruction contained in James 5:14-16. He views all of the instruction contained therein as referring to new believers who are seriously ill,²⁹⁷ writing, "I'm glad God has made provision for the babies. If you can't do it yourself, He has made provision for you...Go ahead

²⁹⁵ Simmons ("Hagin...", 65) rightly argues that it is "anthropology that is the true key to all of Hagin's theology".

²⁹⁶ What to do..., 26.

²⁹⁷ Prevailing..., 79.

and call for the elders of the church”.²⁹⁸ However, he believes, “The older Christian should learn to appropriate healing for himself”.²⁹⁹ Similarly, and with no Scriptural evidence, he only accepts anointing the sick with oil as being an appropriate practice for those believers who “are bona fide spiritual babies” whilst he believes that the very practice is unnecessary because of his presupposition that healing belongs to the believer and can therefore “simply be taken”.³⁰⁰ In this, he ignores the injunction of Jesus (Mk. 6:13) that the disciples should anoint the sick with oil.

Major dissimilarities with Jesus’ healing ministry

Despite his attempts to prove a close relationship between the believer and Jesus, he assumes major differences that undermine such a link. These will now be explored.

Faith

A major feature in his healing theory relates to the concept of faith. It will be analysed under the following headings that explicate his views.

²⁹⁸ Seven..., 45ff; cf. Bible Faith..., 86.

²⁹⁹ Bible Faith..., 86.

³⁰⁰ “Healings...”.

Faith is integral to healing

Hagin believes that faith expressed by the believer is crucial to the occurrence of healing in his/her body. Although he rightly records that Jesus commended faith, he infers that because nowhere in the Bible does Jesus say, "I'll heal you even though you don't have faith", faith is always present when a healing is achieved. Instead, he affirms the view that "the healings of Jesus...demanded faith".³⁰¹ This faith, he anticipates, will always be present in the person healed or those present. Thus, speaking of the healing of Jairus' daughter, he writes, "Jesus didn't do this (heal his daughter) on his own...He (Jairus) had something to do with it".³⁰² However, elsewhere, he contradicts himself, writing that some do get healed even though no faith has been expressed.³⁰³

Similarly, referring to the paucity of healings by Jesus in Nazareth recorded in Mark 6:5, he states, "The Greek says he tried to but he couldn't...because of their unbelief...The few that did get healed had minor ailments...If He couldn't do it at Nazareth, He can't do it now".³⁰⁴ He thus provides further evidence of his inadequate Christology. He chooses not to examine the occasions when Jesus healed people despite the fact that faith is not recorded on their part nor to clarify why apparently despite an absence of faith, some did get healed at

³⁰¹ "Physical..."; he claims that Trophimus did not have enough faith to be healed (Hagin, K.E., The Key To Scriptural Healing, Tulsa:KHM (1978) 13; cf. "Healing", sermon-audio, Birmingham, Alabama (May 22, 1973).

³⁰² "Physical...".

³⁰³ "Healings...".

³⁰⁴ "Physical..."; cf. Hagin, K.E., "Healing and how to keep it", (audio-cassette) Knutsford:FB; Elsewhere (Hear..., 13), he attributes the lack of healing at Nazareth to an absence of a manifestation of the Holy Spirit.

Nazareth. He refers to Mark 7:32f, in which Jesus takes the deaf man aside to minister to him, writing, "The Lord told me that He did this because there was so much unbelief in the town".³⁰⁵ Whilst not providing any biblical support for this perception, he again provides conflicting views, acknowledging, "God will put up with a little unbelief in you when you don't know any better".³⁰⁶

He also believes that a lack of desire results in a lack of healing.³⁰⁷ He describes two believers who gave up believing that they were being healed and died, when medically they did not need to, their reason being that they had seen Heaven and wanted to go.³⁰⁸ No biblical evidence is offered for his beliefs; neither does the New Testament imply that Jesus needed a prior desire for healing to be reflected in people before he could heal them.

He further states, "If you received healing by somebody else's faith, it would not be permanent" advising the believer, "If you are to receive any permanent help then you are going to have to act in faith yourself".³⁰⁹ However, there are occasions in the New Testament³¹⁰ when the faith of another was a key in achieving the needed restoration though there is no suggestion that the problem reverted to the sufferer at a later date.

³⁰⁵ Bible Faith..., 113.

³⁰⁶ The Art..., 78.

³⁰⁷ What To Do..., 75.

³⁰⁸ ibid, 80-84.

³⁰⁹ Bible Faith..., 63.

³¹⁰ Matt. 8:5-13; 9:18-26; 15:21-28.

He also writes of people who "have lost their healing" or who have been "robbed by the Devil"³¹¹ due to the fact that "they didn't know their authority. They didn't know how to hold onto what they had".³¹² He comments on many Christians who do not feel worthy enough to receive healing and thus fail to receive it.³¹³ The above statements are presented with no affirmatory evidence from the Bible. Instead of biblical precedent, personal experiences are offered. No discussion is offered concerning the possibility of the Devil "robbing" the believer of his/her "right to healing"; or the viability of someone losing the healing that has been gained on their behalf through the faith of another; or the credibility of a lack of worthiness being a cause for a believer not being healed. More importantly, none of the above are reflected in the ministry of Jesus.

A major problem with Hagin's teaching concerning faith is his definition of faith which differs from the faith commended by Jesus.

Faith is based on apparent Scriptural promises

His definition of faith equates to a belief that God will heal the sufferer. As a result of his interpretative grid, he thus writes, "If Jesus appeared to you in a vision and said that it was not His will to heal you, He would be making Himself

³¹¹ "Healing and how..."

³¹² The Believer's..., 63; cf. Hagin, K.E., "The Individual's Faith", (audio-cassette) Knutsford: FB (n.d.); What To Do..., 21, 113; The Name..., 139ff; Hagin, K.E., Healing Belongs To Us, Tulsa:FLP (1986) 18f; Bible Prayer..., 47f; How to Keep..., 14ff; Seven Things..., 67.

³¹³ Hagin, K.E., The Real Faith, Tulsa:KHM (1979) 23f.

out to be a liar".³¹⁴ Hagin asserts that his views are based on promises located in the Bible.³¹⁵

He states, "You have a right to believe for anything God's Word promises you".³¹⁶ In this he is correct. However, it is his interpretation of those "promises" that is to be critiqued. The flaw in Hagin's belief system is not his stress on God's faithfulness; that is a biblical stance. Rather, it is in stressing a particular analysis of texts that results in a definition of faith that is suspect, being exegetically invalid. On the basis of Romans 10:17, for example, he states that faith for healing is developed when people hear the Word, by which he means the passages he views as describing promises of healing.³¹⁷

Compounding the inappropriateness of his views is his illegitimate hermeneutic where the meaning of the biblical text is distorted or added to. Thus, he believes that the promise of healing to the believer is "at least 70 or 80 years (That should be a minimum - and you can go on up, according to how much you can believe for)".³¹⁸ He records an incident where he prayed for himself

³¹⁴ What To Do..., 96

³¹⁵ Bible Prayer..., 5; he questions the quality of the better Covenant promised to believers in Hebrews 8:6 if it does not include similar promises to that in the old Covenant (Deut. 7:13-15; Pss. 103:3-5, 107:17-20) (Seven..., 20f; cf. Hagin, K.E., "Healing is provided in the New Testament", (audio-cassette) Knutsford:KHM (n.d.)). Against the charge of some that "that is just for Israel", he states, "If God was opposed to His people being sick *then*, He is opposed to it *now* because God never changes" (Seven..., 20). Furthermore, he states, "If healing is provided for some of us, then it's provided for all of us" ("Know..."), advocating that healing is a Covenant right (Faith..., 79).

³¹⁶ What To Do..., 31, 33; cf. Bible Faith..., 27; God's Medicine, 11; Hagin, K.E., What Faith is, Tulsa:KHM (1983) 1, 11.

³¹⁷ Bible Faith..., 3-6; cf. The Real..., 8, 10f; God's Medicine, 23ff; Prevailing..., 14f.

³¹⁸ What To Do..., 44.

and a colleague because they were to eat food that would normally react against them because of allergies and ulcers. He comments, "My faith worked. It worked because the Scriptures teach that food is sanctified by the Word of God and prayer (1 Tim. 4:4, 5). It worked because this was something that was good and necessary".³¹⁹ However, verse 3 explains that the author is not describing a physical protection of the believer from certain foods but pronouncing the legitimacy of marriage and certain foods forbidden by deceivers in the church. At the same time, Hagin admitted refraining from the exercise of faith when it came to a painful physical reaction he experienced when drinking coffee noting, "I had enough sense to know my faith would not work there. Coffee has no food value".³²⁰ There is, however, no justification for this arbitrary reasoning.

This elasticity of meaning is noted elsewhere. He describes the theory that "faith will work in your heart with doubt in your head".³²¹ He appears to achieve this by recognising that though the mind may doubt God's promises, by concentrating on the promises, one can overcome one's doubts.³²² However, he also states of the unhealed, "The reason they are not healed is that they are thinking wrong",³²³ echoing neo-gnosticism and an anthropocentric resolution to the problem concerned. Such an incoherent view of faith is of little help to the sufferer though may be of use to the faith healer for its

³¹⁹ ibid, 26...his colleague ate chilli!

³²⁰ ibid, 27.

³²¹ ibid, 70.

³²² ibid, 71f.

³²³ Hagin, K.E., Right and Wrong Thinking, Tulsa:KHM (1966) 19 (underlining mine).

discontinuous nature is flexible enough to accommodate the success or failure achieved without calling into question the integrity of the faith healer's beliefs. Most importantly, it is not reflected in the ministry of his apparent model, Jesus.

Faith is believing that what is asked is yours

Hagin advises the sufferer, "Never permit a mental picture of failure to remain in your mind...Doubt is the devil".³²⁴ Questioning whether it is the will of God to heal "violates the promises of God"³²⁵ and as such may be described as "an unwillingness to allow the Word of God to govern our lives".³²⁶ He therefore states, "as long as you hope, it'll never materialize...But the moment you start believing, it will work".³²⁷ Faith is defined as "expecting" to be healed,³²⁸ even that the healing has been granted already.³²⁹

Even though symptoms still remain, he advocates praising God for the restoration³³⁰ instructing his readers, "act as though you have received what you asked".³³¹ Drawing from Genesis 17:5, Ephesians 1:4, Revelation 13:8, and particularly Romans 4:17, he argues that faith is exercised by "calling those things which be not as though they were".³³² He concedes that the latter

³²⁴ Bible Prayer..., 8; cf. Prevailing..., 13f.

³²⁵ What To Do..., 55; cf. The Key..., 7ff; What Faith..., 1f.

³²⁶ The Real..., 18.

³²⁷ Bible Faith..., 15, 20; cf. What Faith..., 4ff, 23-30; Seven..., 42f.

³²⁸ "Healings...".

³²⁹ Bible Faith..., 13f, 16ff, 29; cf. Prevailing..., 11; Seven..., 10f; What Faith..., 17.

³³⁰ Bible Prayer..., 9, 12, 50f, 120; Bible Faith..., 8f, 10ff, 29, 40; Prevailing..., 15f, 17ff; What To Do..., 106, 111f.

³³¹ Bible Prayer..., 115.

³³² What To Do..., 103, 106.

may take some time for "God will permit you to be tried and tested in faith right up to the end".³³³ Indeed, he records that the real test of one's faith that one has been healed occurs when one is suffering pain,³³⁴ though he fails to provide a parallel in the ministry of Jesus whom he is apparently imitating.

In attempting to expose the meaning of Mark 11:23f, he writes, "I saw that the verse says that you have to believe when you pray. The *having* comes after the *believing*". He interprets this in a practical sense by deducing, "I've got to believe that my paralysis is gone while I'm still lying here on this bed, and while my heart is not beating right".³³⁵ He records an incident where a woman had received more than one prayer for healing by a congregation and had died. His assessment was that "Instead of praying again for her healing, they should have raised their hands and thanked God that she had been healed".³³⁶ No valid textual evidence is forwarded for this view.

More particularly, these aspects are not supported in the healing ministry of Jesus, a ministry that elsewhere he strongly advocates should be the pattern to be emulated by believers. Jesus does not condemn doubt nor demand faith; there is no evidence of symptoms remaining after the healing; neither is it recorded that ongoing symptoms are a test of one's faith nor does Jesus request gratitude before the healing occurs. At the same time, Biblical support for God subjecting people to such treatment to prove their faith concerning an

³³³ ibid, 51.

³³⁴ The Real..., 19f.

³³⁵ I Believe..., 27f.

³³⁶ Bible Prayer..., 14.

apparent promise of healing is lacking. The fluidity of his definition of faith is thus again noted; elsewhere, he argues that the authority to be healed has been delegated by Jesus to the believer, though he does not appear to appreciate the incongruity of God withholding such a right from the believer and thus aiding the Devil whom he views as being the instigator of the sickness in the first place.

One of the major flaws in Hagin's view concerning faith needed for healing is that it appears to be qualitatively more important for physical healing than for spiritual salvation. The stress on the integrity and substance of the faith needed before healing may be achieved is significantly greater than that needed for the appropriation of salvation.

Faith is a force with innate power

Hagin interprets Mark 5:34 as an occasion when "Jesus said 'your faith did it'",³³⁷ elsewhere writing, "*Your own faith can initiate healing...You don't have to wait for God to move*".³³⁸ He views faith as a law that God has instituted in the universe, as a result of which automatic responses can be achieved; he states that if one, even an unbeliever, engages in "co-operating with the law of God - the law of faith", s/he would get "results".³³⁹ Major difficulties result from such statements.

³³⁷ "The Individual's...".

³³⁸ What To Do..., 61.

³³⁹ Hagin, K.E., Having Faith in your Faith, Tulsa:FLP (1980) 3f.

He advocates a quasi-magical technique in which the concept of faith becomes the key for transformation. God is not part of the equation; instead, faith is recognised as the authoritative quality needed. Secondly, his anthropocentric bias is again noted. Thirdly, that unbelievers can “use” this faith indicates that God’s promises to believers are apparently able to be appropriated by unbelievers. In this regard, faith is little more than a cosmic channel that allows mankind to harness divine resources whensoever it chooses without entering into any covenantal relationship with God. Finally, none of the above beliefs are reflected in the teaching or ministry of Jesus.

Medicine is equivalent to a lack of faith

Hagin regards it as illegitimate for a believer to visit a doctor for therapy believing that healing for the Christian should only be by supernatural means.³⁴⁰ As a result of an apparent divine revelation, he informed his hearers that healing via medicine is second best, supernatural healing being preferable.³⁴¹

Interpretations of Scripture offered to support his view are illegitimate. He eisegetically interprets the statement that Hezekiah “turned away to the wall” (Isaiah 38:2) as meaning “He turned away from man...from his own symptoms...his own sufferings...medical skill...from everything connected with

³⁴⁰ ibid, 151; God's..., 17f; The Key..., 12.

³⁴¹ “Healing can...”.

human reasoning",³⁴² as a result of which "now God could do something for him".³⁴³ There is no suggestion that Jesus objected to medical therapies. It is significant that such is mentioned in the parable of the Good Samaritan (Lk. 10:30-37) while on occasions, he sends people to receive medical authentication (Mt. 8:1-4; Lk. 17:14). Of the recorded healings of Jesus, it is of note that they are all of major illnesses, to a large degree beyond the powers of medical therapy of the time. As such, they, in particular, were worthy of divine attention. Elsewhere, the New Testament advocates medical therapy (1 Tim. 5:23).

Faith can be developed

Hagin advocates that believers "Find the Scriptures that promise you the things you are praying for" and then "go over them again, and again, and again".³⁴⁴ This reveals that, for Hagin, faith may be developed on the basis of an intellectual awareness of the promises. That which eludes clarification is the measurement of when faith has been achieved so as to effect the healing. He does not, for example, explain why it is necessary to continuously meditate on the promises, though the implication is that the more one reads them, the greater impact they will have on one's psyche.

³⁴² Hagin, K.E., Turning Hopeless Situations Around, Tulsa:KHM (1981) 6f.

³⁴³ ibid, 17.

³⁴⁴ What To Do..., 33; cf. Bible Prayer..., 11; Prevailing..., 11.

He provides inadequate textual interpretation to substantiate the view that faith for healing may be developed. He offers, as evidence, Matthew 8:26, 14:31 which refer to "little faith"; Matthew 8:10 to "great faith"; Mark 4:36 to "no faith" and 2 Thessalonians 1:3 to the view that faith grows. On the basis of these texts, he articulates the opinion that the more faith one has in the belief that healing is the right of the believer, the more likelihood that healing will be achieved.³⁴⁵ He offers Matthew 18:19 as the basis for the encouragement for increasing one's faith as a result of which healing may be effected. He also assumes that agreeing with others concerning healing will effect a change because the quality of the faith expressed is thus apparently developed. He remarks that this practice is another "method" to achieve one's healing though this is only for those who cannot believe for their healing themselves..."the best way".³⁴⁶ Such routes to healing are not evidenced in the ministry of Jesus and, as will be later explored, the faith commended by Jesus is to be equated with a willingness to ask him for help. Jesus did not encourage faith to be developed nor did his response reflect a gradational requirement in faith. What is uncertain in Hagin's view of faith is a clarification of the identification of the faith "needed" in order to receive the "promise of healing". Its very fluidity of meaning undermines the ability of the individual to achieve it.

³⁴⁵ "Healings can..."

³⁴⁶ *ibid.*

Sin

Hagin³⁴⁷ interprets Exodus 15:26 and Deuteronomy 28:15 as God permitting sickness "to come as a result of man's disobedience", obedience and repentance resulting in healing.³⁴⁸ Drawing attention to Psalm 103:3 which promises forgiveness for all sins and healing from all diseases, he deduces that sickness results from personal sin.³⁴⁹ A lack of forgiveness is isolated as a significant reason for a lack of healing.³⁵⁰ There are problems with these concepts, including that of inconsistency.

Thus, he describes an occasion when, after falling and injuring his right arm, Jesus apparently sat on a chair next to his bed. Jesus explained to him that the injury had occurred because he had moved out of his perfect will. He was told that he would have 99% of the use of the arm (as a result of Jesus healing him) whilst experiencing 1% disability to remind him not to disobey again.³⁵¹ Elsewhere though, he states that sickness could never be used by God to achieve anything positive in the life of a believer,³⁵² deducing, "chastening is not via sickness".³⁵³ The fact that Jesus withholds complete healing from him, which is his apparent right, is not addressed. Neither does he acknowledge

³⁴⁷ The Key..., 5f.

³⁴⁸ The Art..., 28; cf. What To Do..., 34.

³⁴⁹ Seven..., 17ff; cf. The Art..., 28; Bible Prayer..., 55, 65; What To Do..., 46.

³⁵⁰ Bible Prayer..., 112.

³⁵¹ I Believe..., 93f.

³⁵² "Where...?"; Bible Faith..., 65; How to Keep..., 31.

³⁵³ The Key..., 16f.

that Jesus, his paradigm, never left a person partially healed nor was any illness described by Jesus as being pedagogically beneficial.

He also offers ineligible exegesis. Thus, he warns that if there is sin in one's life, "your faith won't work", quoting Mark 11:23-25 as evidence³⁵⁴ though the latter verse bears no relationship to prayer for healing, instead being a recognition that reciprocal forgiveness is needed in order to expect divine forgiveness.

Unbiblical beliefs also undergird his views. He believes, for example, that as a result of an individual constantly remembering his/her sins forgiven in the past, God is not able to provide healing; indeed, he encourages believers to recognise that this is a technique of Satan to rob them of their right to healing.³⁵⁵ Again, biblical support is not offered. The suggestion that the remembrance of past sins may thwart the possibility of healing is not evidenced in the ministry of Jesus, his apparent model. Sin is not regarded as a hindrance to the desire and will of Jesus to provide healing and neither is personal sin viewed by Jesus as a major reason for the occurrence of sickness in one's life. Furthermore, it is not recorded that Jesus demanded repentance before effecting any healings. That he views Jesus as a paradigm is not borne out by these dissimilarities in praxis.

³⁵⁴ What To Do..., 38.

³⁵⁵ ibid, 41f.

Prayer

His perspectives on prayer are, to a large extent, self contradictory. He undermines its necessity, stating, "Jesus...never prayed for the sick",³⁵⁶ noting instead, "He would say, 'Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee' (Matt. 8:13)",³⁵⁷ his suggestion being that believers should follow the same pattern. However, he states that he has regularly engaged in prayer for the sick over forty five years.³⁵⁸

Despite his undermining the need for prayer, he also describes the power of prayer as being so great that when he prayed for his Sunday School superintendent who had died, his authority was such that Jesus, revealing the conversation to him later in a vision, said to the dying man, "*Brother Hagin won't let you come*".³⁵⁹ As for himself, he states, "I can't ever remember, in twenty-nine years, not getting that for which I've asked".³⁶⁰

He advocates offering a prayer for healing but states that it should be only offered once, writing, "If a person...asks again, he doesn't believe that he has received, because if he believes that he has received, he would be thanking God for it, then it would be made manifest".³⁶¹ He refers to an occasion when 2000 people prayed for a man who had suffered a heart attack, after which the

³⁵⁶ Bible Prayer..., 116; cf. Prevailing..., 72.

³⁵⁷ Prevailing..., 72.

³⁵⁸ The Name..., 15f.

³⁵⁹ The Art..., 124f (italics original).

³⁶⁰ Bible Prayer..., 21.

³⁶¹ *ibid*, 50, 113.

leader of the congregation asked, "How many of you believe God heard us?". He, along with 90% of the crowd, raised their hands. However, when most of the congregation responded positively to the leader's question, "How many of you are going to keep on praying for brother S.?", he did not. His assessment was, "If that man had been depending on the crowd, he would have died. Because if they kept on praying, they would have nullified the effects of their prayers".³⁶² He writes that to receive one's requests in prayer, one has to agree with the person with whom one is praying. Otherwise, "his will can block my will and my faith".³⁶³

Thus, he interprets Matthew 7:7-11 as meaning "The minute you seek, it is yours. The minute you knock, the door is opened to you" and applies this promise to divine healing in particular.³⁶⁴ These interpretations lack validity and do not take into consideration a range of issues including the conditions implicit in the passage and the present continuous nature of the Greek tenses used. At the same time, he contradicts himself by recounting an occasion when he prayed for three days until a man was healed³⁶⁵ and a period of six weeks during which he prayed concerning a heart problem he was suffering.³⁶⁶ Similarly, he writes, "The reason we don't get more results is because our praying is not intense enough".³⁶⁷

³⁶² The Name..., 148f.

³⁶³ Bible Prayer..., 21.

³⁶⁴ ibid, 111; cf. Prevailing..., 65f.

³⁶⁵ The Art..., 120ff.

³⁶⁶ The Believer's..., 8.

³⁶⁷ Turning..., 13.

He inexplicably describes praying for the sick and feeling the symptoms of their illness in his body.³⁶⁸ He writes, "Since 1949, with only one exception, every time I have made intercession for the sick and taken on their symptoms, they always received their healing."³⁶⁹ This is not explored; indeed, it is not only incongruous, it is unprovable and ultimately absurd, since it is obvious that some illnesses may not be replicated in another person's body. Scriptural evidence for his views is again lacking and a parallel with Jesus in his ministry of healing is not to be found in the Gospels.

It is unclear as to how valid or necessary prayer is for healing in his framework of healing, given his comments on Jesus not praying for the sick, his stress on the authority of the believer to claim healing and his belief in the efficacy of the spoken word. However, he refers to the benefit of praying in tongues for healing,³⁷⁰ stating, on the basis of Romans 8:26, that as a result of praying in tongues, the latter forming 90% of his praying,³⁷¹ "you increase your power in praying 100%"; consequently, he describes a congregation praying for a paralysed man but "the father got the job done when he began to pray in the Spirit".³⁷² However, he does not explain why this is necessary, given that healing is assumed by him to be a right to be claimed by believers.³⁷³ Neither does he clarify the meaning of "praying in the Spirit" nor explain why it and the use of tongues are more effective than prayer in a learned language, nor is this

³⁶⁸ ibid, 61f.

³⁶⁹ The Art..., 31.

³⁷⁰ Laying..., 71ff.

³⁷¹ Bible Prayer..., 41.

³⁷² ibid, 41.

³⁷³ ibid, 41.

reflected in Jesus, his apparent model. He appears to accept praying in tongues as a technique for the achievement of healing. However, he misunderstands the significance of the phrase, "praying in the Spirit". When Paul refers to the phenomenon in 1 Corinthians 14:14, he does not imply that the Spirit is to inject more power into the prayer. The value of the Spirit's involvement is to ensure that the appropriate prayer is offered and that the believer is made aware of a superior force supporting him/her (Rom. 8:26f).

His analysis of a prayer of faith is also unbiblical. He describes it as a prayer that "is primarily prayed for yourself...not for someone else - unless they are bona fide baby Christians".³⁷⁴ He also writes of believers who request prayer for healing who are not fully aware of the teaching of divine healing and states that he "can make a prayer of faith work for them...if they will just remain neutral I can get results for them".³⁷⁵ However, he also writes, "The prayer of faith doesn't always work in every situation. It isn't designed to".³⁷⁶ The contradictions and egocentric nature of his assessment of the prayer of faith are again prominent rather than a recognition of a theocentric sovereignty that motivates it. He offers no biblical support for his view. At the same time, the manipulative nature of the prayer is clear.

³⁷⁴ The Art..., 1; cf. Bible Prayer..., 80.

³⁷⁵ Bible Prayer..., 82.

³⁷⁶ The Art..., 102.

The Name of Jesus

The use of the name of Jesus in healing is a fundamental element in Hagin's healing praxis. There are three aspects to be explored based on deductions he makes.

The power in the name of Jesus is the delegated possession of the believer

Hagin suggests that God has handed over authority to the believer to such an extent that "It is not so much up to God, concerning matters on this earth, as it is up to us".³⁷⁷ On this basis, he records a vision that he apparently received of a demon monkey attempting to interrupt a conversation that he was having with Jesus. Hagin claims that Jesus told him that he did not have the authority to deal with it, it being removed by the name of Jesus spoken by Hagin.³⁷⁸ Jesus apparently told him, "If you hadn't done something about that, I couldn't have", this point being purportedly emphasised by Jesus four times.³⁷⁹

Similarly, he records an incident when he said, "In the Name of Jesus...I break the power of the devil over my brother Dub's life. I claim his salvation...within 10 days, he was born again. I had prayed and fasted for him off and on for 15

³⁷⁷ The Name..., 19.

³⁷⁸ Authority..., 18f.

³⁷⁹ The Believer's..., 30; cf. Hagin, K.E., Demons And How To Deal With Them, Tulsa:KHM (1968) 23f.

years, which never seemed to do any good. But the minute I rose up with the Name of Jesus, it worked".³⁸⁰ Not only does this confirm his formulaic view of the name that appears to have a unique authority of its own, superior to prayer and fasting, it also contradicts his suggestion that "Nobody, through prayer and faith, can push something off on someone else which that person does not want. If we could, we would all put salvation off on everybody".³⁸¹

On the basis of John 16:23, he argues that it is not necessary to use the phrase, "if it is His will" in a prayer that incorporates the name of Jesus.³⁸² Instead, he writes, "the name of Jesus belongs to us".³⁸³ In a prophecy, he remarks, "Power on earth invested in the Name of Jesus Christ... belongeth unto the Church".³⁸⁴

He urges the reader therefore, to "discover the authority that is back of that Name",³⁸⁵ though does not explain how one follows his advice. However, he is convinced that with the authority of the name, "It is just as easy to be healed as it is to be forgiven of your sins".³⁸⁶ This quasi-magical use of the name of Jesus overlooks the necessity of incorporating into a prayer the recognition of the will of the name bearer. Instead, the name becomes a manipulative key to divine resources.

³⁸⁰ The Name..., 38.

³⁸¹ What To Do..., 15.

³⁸² The Name..., 15; cf. Bible Prayer..., 43; Prevailing..., 9.

³⁸³ The Name..., 37, 48, 75, 103, 117, 120f; cf. Hagin, K.E., Your Faith In God Will Work, Tulsa:KHM (1991) 28f.

³⁸⁴ The Believer's..., 10.

³⁸⁵ *ibid*, 44, 59.

³⁸⁶ The Name..., 126.

The name of Jesus has legal implications

He states, "Jesus gave us the right to use His name".³⁸⁷ He approves the suggestion that offering the name of Jesus "places prayer not only on legal grounds, but makes it a business proposition".³⁸⁸ He believes that "what Jesus has done is this: He has signed a check and turned it over to us",³⁸⁹ observing, "His Name guarantees an answer to our prayer".³⁹⁰

He also notes, "I have found that the most effective way to pray can be when you demand your rights. That's the way I pray: 'I demand my rights!'"³⁹¹ Thus, he translates John 16:23 as, "Whatever you demand in my Name, I will do it",³⁹² incorrectly claiming this to be the actual Greek translation.³⁹³ Such presumptive attitudes are not reflected in those healed by Jesus. However, he argues, "You're not demanding of God when you demand your rights; you're demanding of the devil".³⁹⁴ Inexplicably, and in contradiction to the latter, he also records, "You do not command in tones of arrogance, but as a partner...you lay the case before Him"³⁹⁵ obviously referring to God.

³⁸⁷ Prevailing..., 21f; cf. How to Keep..., 10.

³⁸⁸ The Name..., 17.

³⁸⁹ ibid, 22.

³⁹⁰ ibid, 73.

³⁹¹ The Believer's..., 22

³⁹² The Name..., 74; cf. John 14:13 (Prevailing..., 72).

³⁹³ The Believer's..., 23; cf. Bible Prayer..., 115; Seven..., 37.

³⁹⁴ The Believer's..., 22; cf. Seven..., 38.

³⁹⁵ Hagin, K.E., Plead Your Case, Tulsa:KHM (1979) 9.

There is limitless power in the name of Jesus

Hagin³⁹⁶ writes, "All the authority that Jesus had is invested in His Name!", noting that "We heal no-one...it is the Name that does it". This power is so integral to the name that he states, "Many prayers have...not worked because they were prayed for Jesus' sake, instead of in Jesus' Name".³⁹⁷ He writes, Satan "won't argue with you about the Name of Jesus - he's afraid of that Name".³⁹⁸ The formulaic power of the phraseology in which the name is used is reminiscent of the magician's attention to detail and formulaic accuracy. At the same time, the name of Jesus takes on an entity of its own similar to the name magic practised by the Jews and other Ancient Near Eastern people groups.

He exalts the significance of the name of Jesus above faith and prayer, writing, "If I just had enough faith, you might be thinking, I could use that Name. You can use it anyway. It belongs to you...nowhere does Jesus mention faith or belief when He talks about using the Name of Jesus".³⁹⁹ He teaches that the name of Jesus is given for believers to heal unbelievers, not themselves, for they already have the authority to claim healing for themselves.⁴⁰⁰ Similarly, he writes, on the basis of Acts, that "Very little is said about their praying for the sick...most of the time they simply used the Name of Jesus".⁴⁰¹ However, he

³⁹⁶ The Name..., 13; cf. The Believer's..., 10; Bible Faith..., 81, 85f; Seven..., 39.

³⁹⁷ The Name..., 14; cf. Bible Prayer..., 22; Prevailing..., 19.

³⁹⁸ The Believer's..., 22.

³⁹⁹ The Name..., 117; cf. Bible Prayer..., 26.

⁴⁰⁰ "Know...".

⁴⁰¹ The Name..., 75.

does not interact with the texts in Acts sufficiently and therefore, does not develop a coherent rationale concerning the significance of the name of Jesus, treating it magico-sacramentally.

However, he also records incidents where the name of Jesus is used and yet healing is forfeited because the sufferer "didn't have faith to be healed".⁴⁰²

This elasticity of belief is confusing and does not reflect biblical teaching. The use of the name of Jesus in the healing praxis of Hagin is illegitimate. It is not reflected in the teaching of Jesus; it invests, in the name, power that belongs to God that may be resourced and activated without the involvement of God; it exalts the value of the name above prayer and faith and assumes magical and coercive properties enabling anyone to activate events via a supernatural agency; at the same time, notwithstanding the apparently comprehensive power resident in the name, many are not healed, despite its incorporation in a request for healing.

A Biblical response

A detailed response is required because of the fundamental importance to Hagin of the use of the name of Jesus and the delegated power available to the believer as a result of its incorporation in healing scenarios; it is regarded as having the potential of infusing healing energy into the sufferer. The clearest derivation of the use of the name in healing is from the apostolic use

⁴⁰² *ibid*, 82f.

of the name of Jesus in prayer as recorded in the Acts of Apostles.⁴⁰³

Promises by Jesus to his disciples concerning the efficacy of his name⁴⁰⁴ also form a fertile environment for a belief in the importance of the regular articulation of the name. Many who use the name of Jesus in healing settings claim to be obeying the commands of Jesus and fulfilling his expectations.

The power of the name of Jesus has been increasingly coupled with an assumed power in the spoken word.⁴⁰⁵ However, it is the interpretation of the use of the name that determines whether contemporary believers are actually following the guidelines of Jesus.⁴⁰⁶

On many occasions in the Old Testament, the name is used to represent God.⁴⁰⁷ Dunn⁴⁰⁸ records, "The 'name' in ancient thought was much more closely associated with its bearer than is usual today; it represented him, expressed his nature...to speak the name of Jesus was to invoke his presence and his power, to act as his representative trusting in the effectiveness of his commission and authority". The inclusion of the name in a prayer occurs often in the Bible.⁴⁰⁹

⁴⁰³ Acts 3:6,16; 4:10; 9:34.

⁴⁰⁴ Jn. 14:13f; 15:16; 16:24.

⁴⁰⁵ cf. Cerullo, M., Christ your Health, San Diego:MCWE (1993) 62, 185.

⁴⁰⁶ cf. Warrington, K., "The use of the name (of Jesus) in Healing and Exorcism", SPS/EPCRA Conference Papers, Mattersey (1998).

⁴⁰⁷ Deut. 28:10; Josh. 9:9; 2 Sam. 6:2,18; 1 Kgs. 3:2; 1 Chron. 22:7,19; Ps. 7:17; Prov. 18:10; Isa. 18:7; Joel 2:26; Mic. 5:4; Zeph. 3:12.

⁴⁰⁸ Dunn, J.D.G., Jesus and the Spirit, London:SCM (1975) 164, 177; cf. Cullmann, O., Prayer in the New Testament, (transl.) Bowden, J., London:SCM (1995) 10; Unger, M.F., "Divine Healing", BS, (July 1971) 236; Wink (W., Naming The Powers, Philadelphia:Fortress Press (1984) 1.21) states that the name is "the part representing the whole"; Thurston, B., Spiritual Life in the Early Church, Minneapolis:Fortress Press (1993) 36.

⁴⁰⁹ Gen. 4:26; 1 Kgs. 18:24; Ps. 114:4; Joel 2:32; Zeph. 3:9; Jn. 16:24; Acts 2:21;

The use of a "name" has been associated with power and authority in non-Jewish⁴¹⁰ and Jewish religion and culture.⁴¹¹ Indeed, the "name" of the Lord and the "power" of the Lord often appear to be used synonymously in Biblical and early Christian literature,⁴¹² and the incorporation of the name of the Lord undergirds an expectation to see his power in operation.⁴¹³ Thurston⁴¹⁴ notes, "God's name functions as God's power. Those who invoke the name, invoke the power of God." However, this characteristic needs careful analysis. There are two main options offered with regard to the association between the name and the authority of the name bearer. The one belief, mainly located in non-Jewish contexts,⁴¹⁵ though also in some Jewish settings,⁴¹⁶ maintained that the name possessed an innate power that is

Rom. 10:13.

⁴¹⁰ cf. Bietenhard, H., "ὄνομα", TDNT, 5.243; Jayne, W.A., The Healing Gods of Ancient Civilization, New York:University Books (1967) 107.

⁴¹¹ Deut. 18:5,22; 1 Sam. 17:45; 1 Chron. 21:19; 2 Chron. 33:18; Jer. 11:21; Authoritative statements are quoted in the Talmud "in the name of" other Rabbis (b. Ber. 9a, 12b, 29b.); Mid. Rab. Ex. 1. 29; b. Yoma 84a; Git. 68 a, b; 1QM. 11.2.3; De Op. Mun. 133; Leg. All. 2:18; 3:87,95,191; De Cher. 55,56; Origen, Contra Celsus 4.33f; cf. Bietenhard, TDNT, 5.253; Davies, T.W., Magic, Divination and Demonology, New York:Ktav (1969) 62f.

⁴¹² 2 Kgs. 2:24; Ps. 117 (118):10ff, 26; Matt. 7:22; Lk. 10:17; Acts 3:6,16; 4:7,10; 16:18; Eus. Hist. 1.3.7; Just. Dial. 30.30; Origen Contra Celsus 1.6, 25, 67; 3.24; Ath. De Inc. 50.4; Thurston (Spiritual..., 38) notes, "Power and name are parallel concepts".

⁴¹³ Matt. 21:9; Mk. 9:38; Lk. 9:49, 13:35; Acts 3:6, 4:7,10; Phil. 2:9f; Col. 3:17; Heb. 1:4.

⁴¹⁴ Thurston, Spiritual... 39.

⁴¹⁵ cf. Bietenhard, TDNT, 5.243; Deissman, A., Bible Studies, Edinburgh:T. & T. Clark (1903) 288; Heitmuller, W., Im Namen Jesu, Gottingen:Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht (1905); Goodenough, E.R., Jewish Symbols in the Graeco-Roman Period 2, New York (1953-1965) 161; Nock, A.D., "Paul and the Magus", in Essays on Religion and the Ancient World, 1 (ed.) Stewart, Z., Cambridge: Harvard University Press (1972) 190f; Pulleyn (S., "The Power of Names in Classical Greek Religion", CQ, 44.1 (1994) 17-25) questions this view as far as Greek religion is concerned, though concedes such was believed in Egyptian religion and the Magical Papyri.

⁴¹⁶ Gen. 32:29 (?); Jer. 10:6; Acts 4:7; 1 Enoch 69:13-21, 25; Rabbinic literature

activated by the mention of the name. The other assumes a weaker association that does not involve manipulation or coercion on the part of the one using the name or automatic release of divine power.⁴¹⁷

However, evidence which might suggest that the followers of Jesus viewed his name as possessing such creatively manipulative power is not located in the New Testament.⁴¹⁸ If the use of the name of the Lord was sufficient to bring about healing, the practice would have always been successful. In the absence of such evidence to confirm this success rate, it behoves us to consider other elements that are to be seen as integral to its effectiveness. To use the name of Jesus in healing with an expectation of a release of power is

records stories reflecting the popular magical ideas relating to the superstitious belief that the power in God's name could be harnessed and used without his permission being granted (ExR. 1:30; LevR. 32:4; EcclR. 3:11; j. Yoma 40d; Tos. Mak. 5:10; cf. Sharot, S., Messianism, Mysticism and Magic. A Sociological Analysis of Jewish Religious Movements, Chapel Hill:University of North Carolina Press (1982) 42; though Baker (W.R., Personal Speech-Ethics in the Epistle of James, Mohr:Tubingen (1995) 26f, 38-42, 48f, 54f, 59f) traces the belief structure concerning the perceived power resident in words in Jewish literature. Although he notes that ancient Near Eastern literature does advocate a belief in the separate identity of words once spoken from the speaker, he concludes that the evidence of the Old Testament, Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha and Qumran does not support a belief that the Jews thought that words had magical power; contra Bietenhard, TDNT, 251; Dawson, G.G., Healing: Pagan and Christian, London: SPCK (1935) 98; Yamauchi, E., "Magic or Miracle? Diseases, Demons and Exorcisms", Gospel Perspectives 6, (eds.) Wenham, D., Blomberg, C., Sheffield:JSOT Press (1986) 132; Grether, O., "Name und Wort Gottes im AT", ZAW, 64 (1934) 59; Simon, M., Verus Israel, Oxford:OUP (1986) 343-353; Schiffman, L.H., "A Forty two letter Divine Name in the Aramaic Magic Bowls", BIJS, 1 (1973) 97-102; pace Lauterbach, J.Z., "The Belief in the Power of the word", HUCA, 14 (1939) 301-302.

⁴¹⁷ cf. Grether, "Name...", 183; Thiselton (A.C., "The supposed power of words in the Biblical Writings", JTS, 25 (1974) 291) states, "If the words themselves have the power, God is redundant to the scene"; Thurston (Spiritual..., 38) notes, "The name of Jesus shows its power only where one joins Jesus in faith and obedience".

⁴¹⁸ cf. Thiselton, "The supposed...", 283-298.

inappropriate and illegitimate, although this undergirds much of the writings and popular beliefs concerning the name in the Faith Movement.⁴¹⁹

Therefore, although the name may serve to remind a person of the power of the name bearer,⁴²⁰ the will of the owner of that power is to be recognised as being of paramount importance.

The legitimate and authoritative use of the name presumes relationship with the name bearer

Simply put, the person who prays in the name of Jesus is expressing trust in him on the basis of a personal relationship.⁴²¹ Matthew 7:22 records the importance of doing the will of God as a basis for a legitimate use of his name. Bruner⁴²² believes that the reference is to successful "Christian workers" whom Jesus disowns because they have usurped his authority. This however, assumes the possibility of someone functioning in the power and authority of Jesus, yet without his permission.

⁴¹⁹ cf. Warrington, K., "The Use of the Name (of Jesus) in healing and exorcism with particular reference to the teachings of Kenneth Hagin", JEPTA, 17 (1997) 16-36.

⁴²⁰ Wink, Naming..., 22.

⁴²¹ cf. Munn, G.L., "The Importance of Praying in the Name of Christ", SWJT, 38.3 (Summer 1996) 43; Hogan, L.P., Healing in the Second Temple Period, Gottingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht (1992) 255; Dunn, Jesus..., 165; Cullmann, Prayer..., 101; Hurtado, L., "Miracles...Pagan and Christian", Paraclete, 4.4 (1970) 15f.

⁴²² Bruner, F.D., Matthew: A Commentary Vol. 1, Dallas: Word (1987) 1.286; Davies and Allison (W.D., and D.C., The Gospel according to St. Matthew, Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark (1991) 1.715) believe that they are "in the Christian camp" insofar as they call Jesus "Lord, Lord".

However, the importance of the will of God (v. 21) and obedience to Christ (vs. 24-27) preclude this interpretation. The previous passage (vs. 15-20) introduces the reader to the danger of false prophets who make claims but are betrayed by their lifestyles as a result of which they are to be rejected. The fact that Jesus emphatically states he has never known them undermines the possibility that these are Christian workers. That they are described as evildoers also militates against any Christian pedigree. Finally, it is incongruous that they should be described as evildoers when the activities concerned were also evidenced in the ministry of Jesus himself.

Gundry⁴²³ assumes a reference to false prophets, "Jews or Gentiles who judaised their Christianity" while Hagner⁴²⁴ writes, "They have never in fact participated in the Kingdom of God". Their identification as unbelievers seems most likely. However, the question remains as to whether unbelievers can achieve what they claim. This would credit to Satan significant powers if God is not their source.⁴²⁵ However, the quality of their claim needs to be assessed before conclusions are drawn, for those claims may be devoid of reality, being offered simply to gain entrance into the Kingdom. The context of the verses is a useful guide to the value of their claims for they are located at the conclusion to the Sermon on the Mount and immediately before the final illustration which

⁴²³ Gundry, R.H., Matthew: A Commentary on his Literary and Theological Art, Grand Rapids:Eerdmans (1982) 133.

⁴²⁴ Hagner, D.A., Matthew 1-13, Waco:Word (1993) 1.188; cf. Richards, J., The Question of Healing Services, London: Daybreak (1989) 47; Patte (D., The Gospel according to Matthew, Philadelphia:Fortress Press (1987) 100) states, "They have only acknowledged and shared in his authority as miracle worker; they have only acknowledged and shared in his power".

⁴²⁵ cf. Matt. 24:24; 2 Thess. 2:9; Rev. 13:13-15.

stresses the importance of obedience to the teaching of Jesus. Insofar as the first part of the pericope (v. 21) contrasts the articulation of a claim to relationship with obedience, the importance of the passage is to show that verbal formulae are no substitute for the righteousness taught by Jesus which is integral to a relationship with him. They may claim relationship by stating that they use the name of Jesus but their deeds are evil; their pretended relationship with Jesus is no more than that, a pretence.

Despite the fact that they claim to have achieved these miracles, the text does not establish the veracity of their claims and it is to be deduced that it is little more than a ruse to be accepted on "that day" (v.22). The threefold use of the phrase "in your name" is significant. Those concerned do not simply claim to have prophesied, cast out demons and done mighty works so much as that they have achieved these results with his power and authority...in his name. Whatever their claims, they are mistaken, for Jesus rejects them as evildoers. If the aorist tense has any significance, it may be to highlight the irregular nature of their activities. This would then be a contrast to the present continuous participle "doing" (v. 21) with which Jesus describes the one who will enter the Kingdom of Heaven as one who is continuously doing the will of the Father.

Morris⁴²⁶ suggests that the omission of the preposition ἐν(in) before the name of the Lord may indicate "that the meaning may be 'with' the name rather than

⁴²⁶ Morris, L., The Gospel according to Matthew, Grand Rapids:Eerdmans (1992) 180.

'in' the name, in which case the claim is that they had the name as the weapon they could wield". This is an attractive suggestion, especially as it is the only time in the context of healings/exorcisms that this occurs. If the evildoers are claiming more than they had achieved in order to be accepted by Christ, they may have condemned themselves by this inappropriate use of the term.

The significance of this passage is thus to show that the use of the name of Jesus does not guarantee acceptance by him. Intellectual knowledge that is devoid of relationship results in a lack of authority being granted to use the name. Instead, the context reminds the readers that obedience to the words of Jesus is superior to any demonstration of power, real or imagined. Quality of obedience, not charismatic dynamics, is the basis of a relationship with Jesus.

Thus, in Mark 9:38ff and parallels, Jesus allows a man to continue using his name in exorcisms, even though he is not one of the Twelve. The issue of the passage is not relating to the power resident in the name, but the authority for its use. As far as the disciples were concerned, the man was exorcising demons; what needed to be established was whether he was authorised so to do. The fact that Jesus allows him to continue shows that his actions are valid.⁴²⁷ The words of Christ (v. 41) that follow clarify the reason for the man's

⁴²⁷ Ferguson (E., Demonology of the Early Christian World, Lampeter: Edwin Mellen Press (1984) 15) suggests the success of the exorcist "may have been allowed by God in order to enhance the reputation and respect for the name of Jesus". This provides more problems than answers. If the lifestyle of the person concerned was not in keeping with the desires of the name bearer, the reputation of the latter would be damaged; also, the danger of such a view is that it allows the possibility of the name being understood magically or sacramentally; instead, the fundamental importance of relationship with the name bearer should be

success and the lack of censure by Jesus. The phrase used denotes a personal relationship with the name bearer rather than an intellectual awareness of the identity of the name. The significance of this pericope is to affirm that a right relationship with the name bearer provides the basis for the authorised use of the name.

The valid and effective use of the name occurs when the will of the name bearer is identified

The use of the name in Jesus' guidance concerning prayer⁴²⁸ has value as a reminder of the importance of the will of God in prayer.⁴²⁹ The name of the Lord is appropriately used when the prayer incorporating it is sanctioned by God, for then it will effect a change.⁴³⁰ Speaking of John 14:13, Witherington⁴³¹ defines the phrase, "ask in my name," as, "asking in accord with the character and will of Jesus".

Tee notes, "There is nothing clockwork or mechanical about prayer...no one can ask for this or that...and think that, by adding at the end of the sentence 'in

recognised as providing the authoritative value of the name. Oepke (A., "ἵνα", TDNT, 3.213) suggests that Jesus endorses the man but remains ambivalent to "the superstition" that is maintained by his act. Lane (W.L., The Gospel according to Mark, London:MMS (1974) 343) comments that the context refers to the unauthorised use of the name not its superstitious misuse.

⁴²⁸ Jn. 14:13f; 15:16; 16:24, 26.

⁴²⁹ 1 Jn. 5:14f; Vaughan (R., Saints for Healing, Derby: Anglican Renewal Ministries (1991) 72) illustrates prayer for healing as being a blank cheque offered to Jesus which he will only sign of it if in agreement with his will.

⁴³⁰ Ex. 5:22f; Deut. 18:18f; 2 Chron. 26:5; Jn. 15:7; Jas. 1:25; 1 Jn. 3:22; 5:14f; cf. b. Yeb. 45b; Zeb. 4b; cf. Munn, "The Importance...", 43.

⁴³¹ Witherington, B.III., John's Wisdom, Cambridge:Lutterworth Press (1995) 250.

the name of Jesus', whatever they request or demand is going to take place forthwith...The owner of the name must authorise it".⁴³² Rogge notes that, "To pray in the name of Jesus is to pray in his character and nature. It is to pray the prayer he would pray...that his (Father's) will, not ours, would be done".⁴³³

The most important aspect related to the name of Jesus is thus not its presence in a healing prayer but its symbolic value as an indicator of the importance of a recognition of the will of God. Given that it has not been demonstrated that the healing power of Jesus has been delegated to believers to emulate Jesus, it is to be doubted that the use of the name of Jesus may function as a healing catalyst. To assume that it does is to indicate a misunderstanding of Jesus' teaching. Although the name is identified in some settings as an element in prayers of restoration, it is to be concluded that unless the above principles are incorporated, it becomes a pseudo-magical implement unrelated to the teaching of Jesus. Those who incorporate the name of Jesus inappropriately cannot rightly claim to be emulating Jesus.

Gradual healing

Hagin believes that healing is not always immediate, arguing that Jesus experienced delayed healing on at least three occasions. He refers to John

⁴³² "The Doctrine...", 203; cf. AOG, "Our position...", 12; "Ask in My name", (anon.) *EE*, (Nov. 2, 1963) 695.

⁴³³ Rogge, L.P., "The relationship between the Sacrament of Anointing the sick and the Charism of Healing within the Catholic Charismatic Renewal", unpubl. Ph.D., Union Theological Seminary (1984) 406.

4:52; as a result of the phrase, "he began to get well", he deduces that the healing was gradual. However, it is to be recognised that this phrase was only part of the question of the official; the reply of his servants was that "On the seventh hour, the fever left him". The healing was thus immediate. He also provides Luke 17:14⁴³⁴ and John 9:11 in order to support his belief that healings need not be immediate.⁴³⁵ However, the interpretations that he offers are weak⁴³⁶ and it is difficult to identify them with the motif of immediacy in the healings of Jesus. Similarly, he writes, concerning Trophimus, in 2 Timothy 4:20, "It may be that when Paul left Trophimus, he was still sick from all outward appearances. But the healing process no doubt had begun".⁴³⁷ He offers no evidence for this interpretation and the belief itself runs counter to the ministry of Jesus that he seeks to emulate.

Anointings

Hagin believes different "anointings" are more present in some than others and that corporate anointings achieve the most.⁴³⁸ For him, this relates to his apparent success in healing cancers, particularly tumours.⁴³⁹ He describes this anointing as being like a coat thrown over him which brings with it healing power, the physical manifestation resulting in his body shaking, his eyeballs

⁴³⁴ Seven..., 63f; "The Individual's...".

⁴³⁵ "Healing is not...".

⁴³⁶ The aorist tense used for "cleansed" (Lk. 17:14) indicates a punctiliar aspect.

⁴³⁷ The Key..., 13.

⁴³⁸ Hagin, K.E., Understanding the Anointing, Tulsa:FLP (1989) 149f, 154.

⁴³⁹ *ibid*, 42.

jumping and an inability to see the crowd. He confesses that this does not happen for long however, as his body would "not be able to take it unlike Jesus who was able to take stronger anointings".⁴⁴⁰ Not only is this an unbiblical description of the way the Holy Spirit manifests himself but also contradicts his view that Jesus functioned in healing power manifested by the Holy Spirit in exactly the same way as believers may do so.

Positive Confession

Hagin believes the healing authority of Jesus is delegated to the believer to such an extent that he records that it can be activated by one's speech. He believes that making positive statements concerning individuals or situations creates a beneficial impact, including healing.⁴⁴¹ On the basis of Hebrews 4:14, he writes, "You are what you say"⁴⁴² whilst on the basis of Mark 11:23, he states, "You can have what you say".⁴⁴³ Other maxims include, "Don't pray it: say it",⁴⁴⁴ "Your lips...can make you a victor or keep you a captive"⁴⁴⁵ and "What I confess, I possess".⁴⁴⁶ On the basis of Romans 10:8, he writes, "Believing with the heart and saying it with the mouth...creates reality".⁴⁴⁷ He further warns that such positive confession must take place before the healing

⁴⁴⁰ ibid, 105, 123, 134f, 139.

⁴⁴¹ What To Do..., 61-65; Hagin, K.E., New Thresholds of Faith, Tulsa:FLP (1980) 40.

⁴⁴² Bible Faith..., 86f; Right..., 8.

⁴⁴³ Bible Faith..., 117; Hagin, K.E., Words, Tulsa:KHM (1979) 3; You Can Have What You Say, Tulsa:KHM (1980) 3ff.

⁴⁴⁴ What To Do..., 78; Bible Faith..., 105f.

⁴⁴⁵ Bible Faith..., 91.

⁴⁴⁶ ibid, 93.

⁴⁴⁷ ibid, 89

can be granted.⁴⁴⁸ However, such a prior statement or belief before healing occurs is not reflected in the ministry of Jesus.

Conversely, he argues that negative confessions are counter productive⁴⁴⁹ stating, "If you are defeated, you are defeated with your own lips".⁴⁵⁰ Thus, he writes that the believer who says, "According to God's word 'I'm healed'," followed by, "Yes, I've got heart symptoms," will nullify the first confession as a result of stating the second.⁴⁵¹ On the basis of Proverbs 6:2, he argues, "The reason so many are defeated is that they have a negative confession".⁴⁵² Indeed, he believes that negative confessions undermine the Word of God and writes, "Every time you confess...your weakness and your disease, you are openly confessing that the word of God is not true".⁴⁵³ As a result of his following such a procedure, he claims not to have had a headache since 1933.⁴⁵⁴

He further states that he has known the power of God "to go into" people "and often come right back out of them", the reason being advanced that "they didn't take hold of it".⁴⁵⁵ Such impersonal pseudo-dynamic language indicates a dispassionate, insouciant energy that is more familiar with nineteenth century Mind Healing Cults, including Christian Science, than the healing ministry of

⁴⁴⁸ ibid, 93; Right..., 17-21, 26ff.

⁴⁴⁹ Bible Prayer..., 54.

⁴⁵⁰ You Can..., 10.

⁴⁵¹ The Name..., 90, 138.

⁴⁵² Bible Faith..., 90ff.

⁴⁵³ ibid, 62.

⁴⁵⁴ Words, 6.

⁴⁵⁵ How to Keep..., 5.

Jesus.⁴⁵⁶ However, he claims, "I learned how to get them healed and keep them healed".⁴⁵⁷ The suggestion that a method of healing may be learned is unbiblical and is not reflected in the ministry of his alleged model, Jesus.

Such beliefs are to be critiqued. Sarles describes this perspective of authority as "a form of magic, with the spoken word as the incantation. The interior logic...argues that since man is a godlike creature, his words, when spoken in faith, have the same intrinsic creative power as God's".⁴⁵⁸ Although the tongue may be a powerful instrument for good or evil (Jas. 3:5-10), Hagin goes far beyond this. Neuman⁴⁵⁹ reasonably concludes that Hagin denies reality, setting up "a dualism which allows him to deny the physical".

Hagin's metaphysical language is open to misunderstanding and its usage reflects the ineptitude of Hagin's argumentation. He advocates a sceptical attitude towards physical evidence when it contradicts his interpretation of Scripture. Thus, sickness is viewed as being "unreal"⁴⁶⁰ and only a symptom of sickness.⁴⁶¹ In his determination to stress his belief that sickness is

⁴⁵⁶ Neuman ("Cultic...", 37-48) explores links between Hagin and the Mind Healing Cults. The similarities are well demonstrated though dependency is not proven unlike the proven plagiarism by Hagin of E.W. Kenyon's writings demonstrated by McConnell, A Different Gospel.

⁴⁵⁷ ibid, 19.

⁴⁵⁸ Sarles, K.L., "A Theological Evaluation of the Prosperity Gospel", BS, 143 (Oct. 1986) 329ff.

⁴⁵⁹ "Cultic...", 34; cf. Tinney, J.S., "The Prosperity Doctrine; An Accretion to Black Pentecostalism", ERT, 4.1 (April-Sept, 1980) 80f; Farah, C., "A Critical Analysis: The Roots and Fruits of Faith Formula Theology", SPS Conference (1980), 4, 7, 14, 26; Kim, "A bed...", 6f; Hunt, D.A., The Seduction of Christianity, Eugene:Harvest House (1985) 20ff, 99ff, 150ff.

⁴⁶⁰ The Real Faith, 29.

⁴⁶¹ The Key..., 27f.

inappropriate for the believer, he writes, "sickness or disease that seems to be in our bodies was laid on Jesus".⁴⁶² At other times, he is less clear, noting the possibility that if he has a headache, his response is not to tell anyone.

Instead, he writes, "If somebody asked me how I was feeling, I would say, 'I'm fine thank you'".⁴⁶³ This, rather than a denial of the reality of sickness, appears to be an attempt to deny its permanency by exerting a positive attitude with the insertion of a lie.

Pertinent to the thesis is that these attitudes are not reflected in the ministry of Jesus who nowhere denies the reality of illness or treats it as only a symptom of a (non-existent) ailment. Allied to this is the recognition that Hagin views the mind as being the power base for a resolution of problems including sickness.⁴⁶⁴ It is as a result of "thinking correctly" that sickness can be removed.⁴⁶⁵ He further maintains that it is not prayer, nor even Jesus, that is of importance in the restoration process; it is oneself.⁴⁶⁶ The egocentrism of his view is emphasised in that an important consequence of his stress on positive confession is that it replaces the need for prayer. Thus, he writes, "I don't believe I prayed more than half a dozen times...in all these years. Why? Because you can have what you say".⁴⁶⁷ Not only is this severely contradicted by the many statements in which he records his dependency on prayer, but it

⁴⁶² Seven..., 54 (underlining mine).

⁴⁶³ Hagin, K.E., "Words", WF, (Jan. 1979) 10.

⁴⁶⁴ Hagin, K.E., Redeemed from Poverty, Sickness, Death, Tulsa (n.p. n.d.) 24.

⁴⁶⁵ Right..., 19, 23.

⁴⁶⁶ cf. Farah, C., "Faith Theology: the Sovereignty of Man", Logos, (May/June 1980) 50-55.

⁴⁶⁷ Words, 9.

also indicates that he has an inappropriately high anthropology at the expense of a low Christology. Instead of requesting healing from God, he argues that it is appropriate, by use of the name, to "take" what one wants. Also, the believer is described as having abilities similar to Christ but also superior for s/he can negate that which the risen Lord would wish to accomplish. It is difficult to understand how he can maintain that Jesus functioned as a paradigm for believers when such concepts are absent from the healing ministry of Jesus. It would be anticipated that all who followed Hagin's guidelines would be healed; the reality proves the opposite. Despite the latter fact, he still promulgates his self - defeating maxim.

Conclusion

The views of Hagin concerning healing are manifold though a theology of suffering is noticeable by its absence. The textual evidence examined later will act as a hermeneutical grid for a further analysis of his beliefs. He propounds a belief system that incorporates an apparent guarantee for believers to receive and maintain physical health on the basis of the authority invested in them by Jesus. Simultaneously believing that Jesus provides a model to be emulated, he assumes that believers should function as successfully as he did. However, although he claims biblical precedent for his views, too rarely does he offer biblical evidence, instead, relying on apparently divine revelations and personal experiences. At the same time, he presents his views in the context of confusion and contradiction. Most importantly for this thesis, although he

claims to be following the model represented by Jesus, he frequently deviates from it, offering a deviant and defective healing matrix.

The role of Jesus in the healing praxis and teaching of John Wimber

Introduction

John Wimber (1934-1997) was the major figure in the Signs and Wonders movement⁴⁶⁸ and influential on healing ministries in the UK.⁴⁶⁹ It is appropriate that a survey of his teaching be undertaken especially given his belief that Jesus acted as a healing model for believers.⁴⁷⁰

⁴⁶⁸ Sarles, K.L., "An Appraisal of the Signs and Wonders Movement", BS, 145 (Jan. 1988) 82; Stafford, T., "Fruit of the Vineyard", CT, (Nov. 17, 1989) 35f; Horton, M.S. (ed.) Power Religion: The Selling out of the Evangelical Church, Chicago:Moody (1992).

⁴⁶⁹ England, E., "Wimber in Westminster", Renewal, 114 (Feb./Mar. 1985) 28-30; "Do we need John Wimber?", Renewal, (Oct. - Nov., 1985) 3; Gibbs, E., "John Wimber-A friend who causes me to wonder", Renewal, (June 1986) 15-18; Pytches, D., Fully Anglican, Fully Renewed, Riding the Third Wave, Basingstoke:Marshall Pickering (1987) 164; Jennings, P., "Cured of a killer disease", Renewal, 129 (Feb. 1987) 10-12; Unger, W., "Signs and Wonders-Wesley, White and Wimber", MBH, (June 12, 1987) 26f; Huggett, D., "A Ministry to be encouraged", in Goldingay, J. (ed.) Signs, Wonders and Healing, Leicester:IVP (1989) 149; Baker, J.A., Graham, A., We believe in the Holy Spirit, The Doctrinal Commission of the Church of England, London: Church House (1991) 45ff; Hunt, S., "The Anglican Wimberites", Pneuma, 17.1 (Spring 1995) 105-118; Gunstone, J., (ed.) Meeting John Wimber, Crowborough:Monarch (1996); Boulton, W., "John Wimber remembered", Renewal, 261 (Feb. 1998) 14-17; Stafford, T., "Wimber's last words", Christianity, 2.4 (Feb. 1998) 20f; Price, C., "The Wonder of Wimber", Christianity, (Jan. 1998) 7; Whitehead, C., "Obituary: John Wimber 1934-1997", GN, 133 (Jan/Feb., 1998) 15; Mather, W., Wiltshire, M., "John Wimber Remembered", HW, 34 (March/April 1998) 9-11.

⁴⁷⁰ This has been offered to a lesser extent elsewhere; for example, Lundy (D.G., "A Pastoral Perspective on the Vineyard Movement", BRT, 3.2 (1993) 28-45) notes the corrective provided by Wimber to a barren orthodoxy whilst offering three corrective comments on his views concerning healing, namely (i) that God's

Jesus the paradigmatic healer

Wimber refers to Luke 9:1f as a basis for believing that the commission given by Jesus to the disciples to heal the sick is valid for believers today,⁴⁷¹ noting, on the basis of Matthew 28:18ff, that "we have been given His authority",⁴⁷² the authority to preach forgiveness of sins being equivalent to the authority to heal the sick.⁴⁷³ This belief will be analysed in the following sections. Wimber's belief that the healing ministry of Jesus may be emulated by believers is based on a number of precepts that are reviewed and critiqued below.

Jesus came to establish the Kingdom of God; this is an ongoing activity of the Church; healing was part of that process; therefore, healing is anticipated now

Not only does Wimber indicate the paradigmatic role of Jesus and his delegating of his authority to his followers, but he also concentrates on the significance of the institution of the Kingdom by Jesus; as a result of the latter, divine healing is now to be anticipated by believers. Stibbe⁴⁷⁴ accurately

work is not normally done through extraordinary manifestations of power, (ii) suffering is central to discipleship and (iii) God's plan for the believer is conformity to Jesus, a person, not a plan.

⁴⁷¹ Wimber, J., Springer, K. Practical Healing, London:HS (1987) 51; cf. Power Evangelism, 168, 173; Power Points, Anaheim:Mercy Publs. (1985) 13; Wiltshire, "John...", 11; Wimber, J., "Power Evangelism", PR, (Feb. 1985) 5.

⁴⁷² Practical Healing, 52; cf. Wimber, Healing '95 Session 10 (Harrogate) (Nov. 16, 1995).

⁴⁷³ Power Healing, 47f.

⁴⁷⁴ Stibbe, M., in Gunstone, Meeting..., 91.

describes the Kingdom of God as Wimber's "core doctrine". Wimber⁴⁷⁵ stresses the two fundamental components in the ministry of Jesus as being the proclamation of the Gospel followed by the demonstration of the power of the Kingdom.⁴⁷⁶ He writes that the purpose of the healings of Jesus is to "show us what the kingdom of God is like, to reveal glimpses of God's love, peace and joy".⁴⁷⁷ He believes, "Healing is the manifestation of the Kingdom of God and takes place amongst the receptive whosoever".⁴⁷⁸ His basis for praying for the sick is that it is fulfilling God's will on earth, providing Mark 1:34, 16:18 and Luke 9:1, 10:9 as evidence.⁴⁷⁹

Similarly, he writes, "When Jesus healed disease...he pushed back the Kingdom of Satan",⁴⁸⁰ disease being "one of Satan's most effective tools".⁴⁸¹ He offers Luke 13:10-17 as evidence for this comprehensive statement. He

⁴⁷⁵ Wimber, J., Springer, K., Power Evangelism, San Francisco:Harper (revised edition 1992) 86.

⁴⁷⁶ "Signs and Wonders in the Growth of the Church", Church Growth: State of the Art, (ed.) Wagner, C.P., Wheaton:Tyndale Press (1989) 223; cf. Wimber, J., A Brief Sketch of Signs and Wonders through the Church age, Placentia:VMI (1983) 1-55; Wimber, J., Signs and Wonders and Church Growth, Placentia:VMI (1984) 1ff.

⁴⁷⁷ Power Evangelism, 161; cf. Wimber, J., Springer, K., Power Healing, London:HS (1986) 102; Wimber, J. Healing '95 Session 1, Brighton Conference, London:VMI (1995).

⁴⁷⁸ Wimber, J., Healing Seminar, London:VMI (n.d.) 9.

⁴⁷⁹ Power Healing, 16.

⁴⁸⁰ Wimber, J., Springer, K., Power Evangelism: Signs and Wonders Today, London:HS (1985) 101; cf. Stafford, T., "Testing the Wine from John Wimber's Vineyard", CT, (Nov. 17, 1989) 35; Healing '95 Session 4 (Brighton), (Nov. 8, 1995).

⁴⁸¹ Power Evangelism, 173; cf. Wimber, J., The Kingdom of God, Anaheim:Mercy Publs. (1985) 41; Power Healing, 35, 39; Power Evangelism: Signs..., 101.

writes Jesus "saw the connection between sickness and Satan",⁴⁸² sickness being caused by the curse.⁴⁸³

Although the Kingdom has been established by Jesus, Wimber is aware that "the fullness of the Kingdom has not yet come" and therefore "The healing ministry is partial, already present in this age but not completed".⁴⁸⁴ Similarly, he writes, "We are living between the first and second comings of Christ... between the 'already and the not yet'". Thus, he writes, "Physical healing is an outcome of the atonement rather than in the atonement".⁴⁸⁵ This provides the interpretative key for understanding "why the physical healing that Christ secured for us at the Cross is not always experienced today".⁴⁸⁶ The perception of Gibb⁴⁸⁷ that "One cannot help thinking that healing is more important to Wimber...than it is to God" is an inadequate response. Similarly, although Wacker⁴⁸⁸ writes, "Signs and wonders were never a central feature of Jesus' ministry", this is not to be viewed as a concept far removed from the perception of Wimber. He also is aware of the secondary nature of healing to the proclamation of the Kingdom, noting, "It isn't the whole of the Christian

⁴⁸² Power Evangelism, 176; cf. Wright (N., Smail, T., Walker, A., Charismatic Renewal, London:SPCK (1995) 167) notes that this has been changed from the previous edition (Power Evangelism: Signs..., 105f) where the words read, "Jesus...saw an integral unity between sickness and Satan".

⁴⁸³ Healing Seminar, 13.

⁴⁸⁴ Power Evangelism, 55, 169.

⁴⁸⁵ Power Healing, 165ff.

⁴⁸⁶ Wimber, J., Kingdom Suffering: Facing Difficulty and Trial in the Christian Life, Ann Arbor:Servant (1988) 27f.

⁴⁸⁷ Gibb, D., "Look back in Wonder?", VoxE, 26 (1996) 40.

⁴⁸⁸ Wacker, G., "Wimber and Wonder-What about miracles today?", TRJ, (April 1987) 16.

reality".⁴⁸⁹ There are however, a number of difficulties with his views concerning healing and the Kingdom of God.

An overemphasis on power

The delegated power of the believer is a prominent aspect of Wimber's mindset.⁴⁹⁰ Wimber believes that healing is particularly appropriate in the realm of evangelism, "power evangelism" being the characteristic term used to describe his evangelistic emphasis.⁴⁹¹ However, the signs of Jesus are not to be exclusively viewed as evangelistic, given that often faith was not expressed after they had occurred; indeed, Jesus refused to give signs when requested as a means to faith and the stress on signs is warned against by Jesus.⁴⁹² Rather, the signs are to be seen as mainly having a cosmic impact in

⁴⁸⁹ Hall, D., "John Wimber on the message, the miracles-and the critics", Renewal, 121 (Feb/March 1986) 18.

⁴⁹⁰ Knight, "God's Faithfulness...", 84; Percy (Words..., 16) defines power as "a principle of coherence for the interpretation of Wimber"; Friesen (A., "Wimber, Word and Spirit", Wonders and the Word: An Examination of the Issues raised by John Wimber and the Vineyard Movement, (eds.) Coggins, J.R., Hiebert, P.G., Hillsboro:Kindred Press (1989) 42) states, "Power is the watchword of the Wimber movement"; Perrins, R.D., "Signs and Wonders: The Growth of the Vineyard Christian Fellowship", unpubl. PhD, Washington State University (1989) 76f; Hall, "John...", 18; pace Wright and Stibbe in Gunstone, Meeting..., 57, 91.

⁴⁹¹ Power Evangelism, 35, 107, 117, 170ff; cf. Wimber, "Zip to 3000 in 5 years", CL, 44 (Oct. 1982) 19-23; Power Healing, 60f; "Signs and Wonders", GCG, 20 (Jan-Feb. 1983) 240; "Power Evangelism", Renewal Journal, 107.2 (1997) 3-8.

⁴⁹² Mt. 12:29, 16:4; cf. Glasser, A.F., "Church Growth at Fuller", MAIR, 14 (Oct., 1986) 414f; Gunstone, J., Signs and Wonders, London:DLT, (1989) 96; Shepherd, D.H., "A Critical Analysis of 'Power Evangelism' as an Evangelistic Methodology of the Signs and Wonders Movement", unpubl. D.Th., Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary (1991) 95; MacArthur, J., Charismatic Chaos, Grand Rapids:Zondervan (1992) 166f; Dickinson, R., God does heal today, Carlisle:Paternoster Press (1995) 273.

establishing the kingdom and not solely acting as a key for individual entrance; the latter was dependent on faith. The miracles were not demonstrations of power to force people to accept Christ.

One danger of Wimber's emphasis on healing is that evangelism without such phenomena may be understood as being deficient, given that he claims, "the best explanation of the message of Christ was to be found in the demonstration...of God's power".⁴⁹³ Such a view needs qualification.⁴⁹⁴

Furthermore, he deduces, "it was Christ's intention that the kingdom of God be spread in the same way that he spread it - through power evangelism",⁴⁹⁵ and condemns the contemporary Church for its lack of expectation.⁴⁹⁶ Thus, a paradigmatic role of Jesus in healing in evangelistic contexts is presented as the basis for a similar healing ministry by the contemporary Church.

Percy,⁴⁹⁷ in his wide ranging analysis and critique of Wimber's notion of power, concludes that it does not reflect the ministry of Jesus which, he suggests, is best summed up in love. Thus, he questions the very paradigm that Wimber presents of Jesus. Indeed, he accurately comments that the 'power encounters' of Jesus "do demonstrate that he can more than match the exercise and effect of Satan's power. Yet, ultimately, he does not choose this way for himself: Christ gradually abandons 'signs and wonders' as his will and

⁴⁹³ "Signs and Wonders...", 241.

⁴⁹⁴ cf. Wacker, G., "Wimber and Wonders-What about Miracles today", TRJ, 35 (April 1987) 16ff; Packer, J., "The Intellectual", John Wimber, (ed.) Pytches, D., Guildford: Eagle (1988) 263.

⁴⁹⁵ Power Evangelism, 60.

⁴⁹⁶ Wimber, J., "John Wimber calls it Power Evangelism", Charisma, (Sept. 1985) 35.

⁴⁹⁷ Percy, M., (Words, Wonders and Power, London: SPCK (1996) 140f.

life converge with God's heart at the pinnacle of Golgotha".⁴⁹⁸ Indeed, John 12:31 reveals that the greatest expression of power, casting out Satan was the most complete example of weakness - the Cross.

The establishment of the Kingdom of God was completed in the death of Jesus. In that act of apparent weakness and failure, the finale of Jesus' ministry was accomplished and "the ultimate divine paradigm" was established.⁴⁹⁹ The cross must be recognised as the key to an accurate understanding of the integral aspects of the Kingdom of which the healings of Jesus are but a reflection. Similarly, Percy⁵⁰⁰ concludes, "The Church which does not reveal the crucified Jesus but only the exalted Christ inevitably runs the risk of honouring exaltation itself, whilst rejecting the way of the Cross". Cousar affirms that this results in a "skewed Christianity".⁵⁰¹ Black⁵⁰² appositely warns of the danger of emphasising "Jesus as the miracle worker but not as the one who was crucified in weakness". Percy criticises Wimber's absence of concentration on the sufferings of Jesus and the call to follow Jesus in that area also.⁵⁰³ Such comments offer a helpful corrective and balance to Wimber's presentation of the power motif in Jesus' ministry.

⁴⁹⁸ ibid, 132.

⁴⁹⁹ Fee, G., God's Empowering Presence, Peabody: Hendrickson (1995) 360.

⁵⁰⁰ Words..., 137.

⁵⁰¹ Cousar, C.B., A Theology of the Cross: The Death of Jesus in the Pauline letters, Minneapolis: Fortress (1990) 166f.

⁵⁰² Black, Paul Apostle of Weakness, 165.

⁵⁰³ ibid, 133.

Unfulfilled expectations

Given his stress on the limitless power of God available to believers, his beliefs have the tendency of marginalising believers who do not see the manifestation of this power in terms of restoration from illness and who remain in their suffering. For Wright, this leads to the conclusion that "to remain unhealed is in some way still to be the victim of the evil one. There is little room here for peaceful resignation and acceptance".⁵⁰⁴ Instead, there is a heightened expectation that God will restore. This has often dangerous consequences when the expectations are not realised.⁵⁰⁵

Pertinent to our thesis is the fact that the successful outcome of Jesus' ministry of healing in establishing the Kingdom is to be contrasted with Wimber's healing ministry. Wimber's declaration that believers may emulate the comprehensive healing ministry of Jesus is not matched in reality and such high expectations are not realised. In this regard, although claiming a healing paradigm in Jesus, he is not able to adequately explain the disparity with other healing ministries, though he readily acknowledges it.

⁵⁰⁴ Charismatic..., 74.

⁵⁰⁵ Benn, W., Burkill, M., "A Theological and Pastoral Critique of the Teaching of John Wimber", Churchman, 101.2 (1987) 106; this "heightened dualism" (Smail et al, Charismatic Renewal, 75) is illustrated by the conclusion offered on BBC radio by Blaine Cook, one of Wimber's colleagues, that "Satan murdered David Watson" referring to the death of the Anglican vicar. Wimber, however, described his death in terms of his "going home" (Power Healing, 19).

Jesus promised that believers would emulate him

The delegated healing power of the believer is of crucial importance to Wimber.⁵⁰⁶ Percy⁵⁰⁷ observes that "For Wimber, one of the primary tasks of Jesus was to be a model of divine power for the disciples. They were to observe Jesus' power over sickness..., copy the 'model' that Jesus used, and then attempt to emulate the process". Wimber, in his Healing Seminar⁵⁰⁸ notes records, "After He modelled healing, He commissioned His disciples to go and heal, and He gave them the power to do so...since Jesus has left the earth, the impartation of His ministry has not changed. His commission still stands for all believers".

In response to the question does everyone get healed, Wimber notes, "Jesus healed *all* who came to Him (Matthew 4:24, 8:16; Mark 1:32; Luke 6:18,19)", the implication being that such healing power is available now also.⁵⁰⁹ He also links Matthew 28:18-20 to 10:1,8.⁵¹⁰ However, as Gibb⁵¹¹ notes, "In his desire to encourage the ministry of healing, and because he genuinely believes that they are crucial to the church's mission, he concludes that these 2 passages are linked despite there being no such ministry mentioned in Matthew 28:18-20".

⁵⁰⁶ Wimber, J., Kingdom Come: Understanding what the Bible says about the Reign of God, Ann Arbor: Vine Books (1988) 8.

⁵⁰⁷ Words..., 86.

⁵⁰⁸ Healing Seminar notes, Anaheim: VMI (n.d.) 24.

⁵⁰⁹ Healing Seminar..., 11.

⁵¹⁰ Wimber, J., "Learning to minister like Jesus", Signs and Wonders and Church Growth part 2, Anaheim: VMI (1985).

⁵¹¹ Gibb, "Look...", 32.

Wimber⁵¹² writes, "We have been given the keys of the kingdom, the authority and power over the enemy". Based on Acts 1:8, he defines the authority of the believer as "the right to use the power of God",⁵¹³ "power that Christ freely gives Christians".⁵¹⁴ Thus, he states, "When Jesus commissioned His followers...they understood that they were to go out and do exactly what Jesus had shown them".⁵¹⁵ On the basis of Matthew 9:8, which describes the people marvelling that God had given "such authority to men" referring to Jesus' healing of the paralytic, he concludes, "The implications of this passage seem clear to me: Christians are commissioned by God to heal the sick. / am commissioned to heal the sick".⁵¹⁶ Basing his thesis also on Matthew 6:10, Wimber further argues, "The church of today is supposed to be expressing the kingdom will of the Father...to continue Jesus' ministry in the world"⁵¹⁷ especially with regard to "the transference of Jesus' healing ministry to the Church".⁵¹⁸

Speaking of healings, he suggests that believers could be judged if they did not learn "to do the things that Jesus told us we were to learn to do".⁵¹⁹ Jesus is thus confirmed, in his thinking, as the paradigm for healing praxis for the

⁵¹² Power Evangelism, 39; cf. Wimber, J., "Personal Pilgrimage", (audio-cassette) Anaheim: VMI, (1984).

⁵¹³ Power Evangelism, 41, 145; cf. "Signs and Wonders...", 222.

⁵¹⁴ Power Evangelism, 168...offering Mk. 16:17f; Lk. 10:17ff; Eph. 6:10-18; Jas. 4:7; 1 Pet. 5:9; 1 John 4:4 and Rev. 12:11 as evidence.

⁵¹⁵ Wimber, J., "Power Evangelism: Definitions and Directions", Wrestling with Dark Angels, (ed.) Wagner, C.P., Ventura:Regal (1990) 22f.

⁵¹⁶ Power Healing, 66 (italics his).

⁵¹⁷ Healing '95 Session 10; The Kingdom..., 43.

⁵¹⁸ Healing Seminar, 22f; Power Healing, 47f.

⁵¹⁹ Wimber, J., "Signs and Wonders in the New Testament", (audio-cassette) Anaheim:VMI (1984).

contemporary Christian. On this basis, he encourages the practice of laying on of hands, describing it as "an integral part of praying for the sick".⁵²⁰ He writes, "By embracing, touching...we do what Jesus said to do...in love".⁵²¹ However, he later testifies to the fact that he now rarely lays hands on people.⁵²² The paradigm thus appears to be flexible.

More importantly, Wimber's basic conviction that the task of the Church is to heal the sick and that it has received a command so to do is to be questioned for its assumptive basis. It may be argued that the commission in Matthew 28:18-20, which does not include the mandate to heal in the universal mission of the Church but does include the commands to preach, teach, make disciples and baptise, should be understood as undergirding the ministry of the Church, not references such as Matthew 10:1, 8 which are directly related to the Apostles. The latter issue will be explored later.⁵²³ However, any identification with a healing ministry in Matthew 28 is at best, only implied. Not all aspects of the commission in Matthew 10 may be assumed as being validly included in the later commission in 28:18ff. Wright⁵²⁴ concludes, "This does not mean that there should not be healing but that faith does not have a universal command

⁵²⁰ Practical Healing, 34.

⁵²¹ Wimber, J., "The Church: Healing's Natural Home?", Leadership, 6.2 (Spring 1985) 127; Power Healing, 196f.

⁵²² Healing '95 Session 10.

⁵²³ see pps. 319

⁵²⁴ Wright, N., "The case for Wimber revisionism", Renewal, 154 (March 1989) 13; cf. Schmidt (J., "New Wine from the Vineyard", Wonders..., Coggins, (eds.) 73); Smedes (L.B., (ed.) Ministry and the Miraculous. A case study at Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena:Fuller Theological Seminary (1987) 20f)) and Gibb ("Look back...", 32f) question Wimber's view that the mandate of Jesus to the disciples should be automatically applied to later believers.

to offer healing...and faith is only valid when it is directed to a specific command or promise of God".

There are however, a number of other problems with Wimber's praxis and views in this regard. Firstly, there are significant dissimilarities in the quality of the healings in his healing ministry as compared to those in the ministry of Jesus. Wright⁵²⁵ states, "The rhetoric about miraculous healing far exceeds the reality. The testimonies to healing do not appear to be of the same order as the miracles of the New Testament". Thus, he deduces, "There are at least fifty categories which have to be examined when dealing with people and their lack of healing".⁵²⁶ This is not reflected in the ministry of Jesus, the model he attempts to emulate. When questioned about the difference in the success rate between his healing ministry⁵²⁷ and that of Jesus, Wimber states that he had "come to understand that current miracles fit into the New Testament not at the point of Jesus and the Apostles and the coming of the Kingdom but in 1 Corinthians 12-14 and the gifts of healings".⁵²⁸ This indicates a shift away from the theory that Jesus functions as a paradigm for the contemporary believer. This indicates an awareness, albeit limited, that the charismatic gifts of

⁵²⁵ Charismatic Renewal, 76; cf. Gross, E.N., Miracles, Demons and Spiritual Warfare, Grand Rapids: Baker (1990) 22; Lewis, D., "Who does God heal?", HW, 4 (Oct-Dec. 1991) 36; Hacking, P.H., "A Ministry easily over-emphasised", Signs, Wonders..., (ed.) Goldingay, 162f.

⁵²⁶ Hall, "John...", 21.

⁵²⁷ For example, he acknowledges that after prayer for over 200 children with Down's Syndrome, he has only seen marginal improvement in one (Jensen, P., John Wimber Friend or Foe?, London: St. Matthias Press (1990) 7).

⁵²⁸ Jensen, John Wimber...?, 7f; cf. Percy, Words..., 38, 86; Wacker, "Wimber...", 17; Middlemiss, D., Interpreting Charismatic Experience, London: SCM (1996) 163f.

healings form a valid framework for healing situations. However, most of his teaching concerning the potential of healing being achieved by believers is in the context of the healing ministry of Jesus. Although there was the potential that his prime paradigm could have changed from one in which the believer was encouraged to seek to emulate the healing ministry of Jesus to one that looked to the outworking of the Spirit through the charismatic gifts delegated to the Church, it was rarely realised. The result of attempting to maintain both frameworks of healing, despite their distinctives, was that it was impossible to accomodate one without disturbing the paradigmatic nature of the other.

Secondly, he acknowledges that though all are called to pray for the sick, for all "Christians have power over disease",⁵²⁹ he also believes that "There are a few people with special, prolonged anointings for healing".⁵³⁰ However, no evidence is offered for the latter belief. In a lecture given at Fuller Theological Seminary,⁵³¹ he stated that on occasions when he had prayed for people, he was conscious that "the anointing had gone. The Lord had gone". As a result of this, he suggests that others who "have the anointing" or a "gracelet", a word he uses to describe a gift of the Spirit temporarily given, should pray for the sick. He equates the absence of the anointing with a state of exhaustion, though he recognises that he is not able to clarify this theologically.

Nevertheless, experience has taught him that a rest should restore the

⁵²⁹ Power Evangelism: Signs..., 101.

⁵³⁰ Power Healing, 203, 206.

⁵³¹ (Dec. 13, 1990) quoted by Shepherd, A Critical..., 75f.

anointing. This is not reflected in the life of Jesus and undermines any paradigmatic role of Jesus.

Thirdly, as will be explored later, he expresses the possibility that one might learn how to heal as Jesus did. This premise however, is not reflected in the ministry or teaching of Jesus. If Jesus had anticipated that others could learn from him with regard to healing, it would be expected that methodological guidelines or principles would have been offered.

Fourthly, Wimber tends to write for and cater to Christians who are seeking healing whereas Jesus rarely healed members of his family or friends or close followers.⁵³² He mainly healed the marginalised.

Fifthly, and most importantly, he does not resolve the tension between his foundational belief that Jesus has delegated his healing power to believers and the fact that only a few are actually healed.⁵³³ Percy⁵³⁴ describes his attitude as mechanistic, though he is inaccurate to state that Wimber indicates that "power failure is explicitly blamed on the individual or community".

Nevertheless, Wimber's presuppositions inevitably lead to confusing tensions.

⁵³² cf. Percy, M., "Christ the Healer: Modern Healing Movements and the Imperative for the Poor", SWC, 1.2 (1995) 113; Percy, M., "The Gospel Miracles and Modern Healing Movements", Theology, 99.793 (Jan/Feb., 1997) 17 n. 11.

⁵³³ Wagner (P., How to have a healing ministry without making your church sick, Ventura:Regal (1988) 244) notes that Wimber's Fellowship in Anaheim keeps careful records and in 1987, concluded that 26% of those prayed for were made "completely well".

⁵³⁴ Words..., 91.

Thus, he asserts, "I don't teach everyone will be healed", though "I think everyone *could* be healed" with the implication that if barriers preventing the healing are removed, the healing may be granted.⁵³⁵

He reveals a major tension in this area, writing, "It is God's nature to heal people and he has called us to reflect his nature".⁵³⁶ He also states, "God is selective concerning whom he heals",⁵³⁷ recommending that sometimes when healing does not occur, one has "to just leave it to God".⁵³⁸ Indeed, he affirms, "I don't know that everyone is supposed to be healed; I don't teach that and I don't know that Scripture teaches it".⁵³⁹ Such vacillation leads to confusion as to what it means to be able to emulate Jesus with regard to healing and contradicts his belief that "everyone could be healed".⁵⁴⁰ Although he is concerned pastorally for those people who may have had their expectations raised unnecessarily with regard to healing noting "in arousing people's expectations, by even announcing there is a potential for healing...can harm them",⁵⁴¹ he nevertheless defends his raising of people's expectations by saying, "My perception is that if I am doing that, it is because Jesus did".⁵⁴²

Similarly, in the context of referring to a letter sent by a lady who received healing for her ankles but not the restoration of her sight, he rejects the view

⁵³⁵ Hall, "John...", 21.

⁵³⁶ Power Healing, 183; cf. Wimber, Healing '95 Session 1 (Brighton), (1995).

⁵³⁷ Power Healing, 164.

⁵³⁸ Healing Seminar..., 13.

⁵³⁹ Hall, "John...", 21.

⁵⁴⁰ *ibid.*

⁵⁴¹ Healing '95 Session 1.

⁵⁴² *ibid.*

that expects God to heal all her ailments necessarily, stating that such a belief is not Scriptural.⁵⁴³ He candidly states, "More often than not, people have not benefited from our prayers of healing...not all our prayers are answered 'yes'...we always get healed eventually, but not always in this life".⁵⁴⁴ He also states, "We lose credibility when we only share the stories about complete recovery or those miraculous in nature".⁵⁴⁵ He accepts that not all healings occur immediately,⁵⁴⁶ though expresses ignorance as to why this should be.⁵⁴⁷

That which is important to recognise in this area however is that although he views Jesus as the healing model, he acknowledges that the healing ministry of Jesus is not repeated in the ministry of anyone else, not even Paul or Peter.⁵⁴⁸ Furthermore, he demonstrates a discontinuity with the model he assumes may be emulated when he acknowledges that the unique success rate of Jesus has not been achieved in his own ministry. Indeed, he suggests that Jesus "prayed for the sick much more effectively than I do. My hope is I will get better".⁵⁴⁹ Notwithstanding his mistaken perception that Jesus prayed for the sick, so allowing a parallel to be drawn with the practice of others in the New Testament and in the contemporary Church who pray for the sick, more importantly, his hope that he might improve is not clarified, neither are suggestions offered as to how this might be achieved, nor where such a

⁵⁴³ Healing '95 Session 8.

⁵⁴⁴ Wimber, J., "A New Area to Explore", CL, (May 1985) 53.

⁵⁴⁵ Healing '95 Session 8.

⁵⁴⁶ Healing Seminar..., 12.

⁵⁴⁷ Healing '95 Session 8.

⁵⁴⁸ Hall, "John...", 18.

⁵⁴⁹ ibid.

feature is recorded in the New Testament. The paradigm that he assumes may be imitated is thus seen to be too difficult to achieve. In this regard, it ceases to be a paradigm. Unless Jesus imposed conditions for the fulfilment of a commission, it is inappropriate to add ones own. If the paradigm may not be emulated, it may be that that the apparent paradigm itself is to be questioned.

During the Healing '95 Conference in Brighton, during which he described some of his illnesses, including throat cancer, a heart attack and a stroke, he taught and ministered from a wheelchair, regularly taking medication to enable him to speak without his voice drying up.⁵⁵⁰ Writing in 1996, he describes his sense of fear having been diagnosed with cancer concluding, "I had to embrace the truth that I could not control or plan my life".⁵⁵¹ He further writes, "God has the sovereign choice concerning each person for whom we pray. Will he heal, or will he extend grace for suffering instead? Or will he grant healing at a later time?".⁵⁵² However, that which he has not achieved is an absorption of such reflections into a broader framework of healing that can be readily accommodated with his fundamental beliefs concerning the delegated authority of Jesus to believers. Without this, he creates a dilemma as to whether the healing model of Jesus is to be emulated or not. Instead, he acknowledges that it is a dilemma that he has not solved.⁵⁵³

⁵⁵⁰ Healing '95 Session 1.

⁵⁵¹ Wimber, J., "When cancer strikes the healer", Christianity, (Nov. 1996) 38.

⁵⁵² ibid, 39.

⁵⁵³ Hall, "John...", 20f.

It is to be noted that transparent objectivity and awareness of these conflicts existed in his earlier ministry. Thus, he wrote that God sometimes overcomes sickness, and thereby evil, "not by removing it directly but by accomplishing his purposes through it".⁵⁵⁴ Indeed, he claims, "Sometimes, it's a blessing to go through a little suffering" describing times of suffering as greater opportunities for growth than times of prosperity.⁵⁵⁵ In a prayer, he articulates his beliefs thus:- "We understand that you may not thoroughly, completely, 100% heal somebody; on the other hand that you may. It's all within your counsel...we know further you're good, just, gracious, merciful and whatever you decide for us is right and defensible and in that day, we'll understand fully why things went the way they went".⁵⁵⁶ He also records his conversation with his dying friend, David Watson, in which he told him that he needed to acknowledge that he was dying rather than maintain an expectancy of healing.⁵⁵⁷

Earlier, he had written, "It is God's nature to heal, not to 'teach' us through sickness. Sickness is generally not beneficial".⁵⁵⁸ He later offered a different perspective, deducing that his illness had resulted in providing him with a "focus on Christ that he (I) wouldn't have gained any other way".⁵⁵⁹ Still later,⁵⁶⁰ he declares that although God had instructed believers to pray for the sick, "his

⁵⁵⁴ Power Healing, 36; cf. Wimber, J. "Why must Christians Suffer?", Frontline (April 1988) 6.

⁵⁵⁵ Healing '95 Session 1.

⁵⁵⁶ ibid.

⁵⁵⁷ Power Healing, 149.

⁵⁵⁸ Healing Seminar..., 21, 63.

⁵⁵⁹ "When cancer...", 39.

⁵⁶⁰ Wimber, J., "Signs, Wonders and Cancer", CT, (Oct. 7, 1996) 50.

part is to execute his will" though he acknowledges this may not result in healing.

The previous criticism of Packer⁵⁶¹ that Wimber leaves no room for sanctification through suffering is descriptive of an earlier Wimber while Gibb's⁵⁶² perception that "Wimber seems unable to accept that through pain, illness or persecution believers may mature and become more humble and obedient than they might otherwise have been" needs revision. More importantly, this development is indicative of a belief that has aligned itself to a different grid than that which presupposed that Jesus' healing ministry acts as a paradigmatic model for believers. However, it is at the expense of a confusing and diverse catalogue of beliefs that appear to cling to the theory that healing is the delegated gift to believers whilst accepting that reality dictates a different agenda. These comments need to be recognised as emendations of his forthright belief that Jesus may be emulated by believers.

Jesus depended on the Holy Spirit as do believers

Sarles⁵⁶³ believes Wimber depersonalises the Holy Spirit viewing him as "a force that works" rather than "a being who wills". However, he provides an unsubstantiated view and one that Wimber would have rejected. Rather than

⁵⁶¹ Packer, J., "Signs and Wonders: Interview", Touchstone, (Jan. 1986) 7; cf. Fowler, S.K., "Signs and Wonders Today: Some Theological Reflections", BRT, 3 (1993) 46-55.

⁵⁶² "Look back...", 39.

⁵⁶³ Sarles, "An Appraisal...", 81.

depersonalising the Spirit, Wimber is more accurately viewed as desiring to present Jesus in parallel with the believer.⁵⁶⁴ Wimber concentrates on Jesus' humanity at the expense of his divinity in order to identify him with the believer.⁵⁶⁵ The significance of this as a healing model is that the believer may be expected to function as did Jesus by accessing the same power that made it possible for Jesus to function as he did.⁵⁶⁶ The divine has thus so completely assumed humanity that the believer may mirror the ministry of Jesus since s/he may draw from the same resources. Based on his belief that Jesus ministered as a result of dependency on the Holy Spirit,⁵⁶⁷ Wimber deduces that the believer may do likewise, acknowledging, "The Spirit is the Christian's sole resource for supernatural power in doing the work of God".⁵⁶⁸

Percy⁵⁶⁹ views Wimber's assessment of Jesus as subordinationist with the latter functioning as the representative and servant of the Father empowered by the Spirit, though Wimber would not subscribe to such a narrow perspective. More accurately and significantly, Wimber fails to recognise the significance of the fact that Jesus' ministry was unique and that although the same Spirit who empowered Jesus may also empower believers, the mission of Jesus was different to those of his followers. It is this factor that determines

⁵⁶⁴ Wimber, "Signs...", (audio-cassette).

⁵⁶⁵ Packer, "The Intellectual", 261.

⁵⁶⁶ Gibbs, E., "John the Evangelist" (75) Nathan, R., "Bible Teacher" (96) John Wimber, (ed.) Pytches, D., Guildford:Eagle (1998).

⁵⁶⁷ Pytches, D., "Signs and Wonders", John Wimber, (ed.) Pytches, D., Guildford:Eagle (1998) 140.

⁵⁶⁸ Signs, Wonders and Church Growth, Anaheim:Mercy Publs. (1984) sect. 5, p. 8.

⁵⁶⁹ Words..., 88ff; cf. Masters, P., The Healing Epidemic, London:Wakeman Trust (1988) 49.

the relevance of the Spirit to one's life and ministry. To extrapolate from this that the Spirit's involvement in Jesus' life is to be identically replicated in the life of believers is illogical unless it can be proved that their missions are identical to his.

A practical example of his beliefs in this respect is reflected in his stress on the word of knowledge.⁵⁷⁰ He describes this as, "God revealing facts about a situation concerning which a person had no previous knowledge".⁵⁷¹

Supernatural guidance is a very significant feature in Wimber's healing methodology and he refers to the practice of receiving words of knowledge in healing scenarios,⁵⁷² examples of such being presented in testimonies and recorded ministry.⁵⁷³

Wimber claims divine precedent for this in Jesus who, he believes, regularly received words of knowledge from the Father for his knowledge was limited. This, however, is speculative because the Gospels only record that the time of his reappearance from Heaven was not revealed to him. John 5:21 indicates a wide appreciation of knowledge on the part of Jesus. Nevertheless, Wimber states that by a word of knowledge Jesus was informed about the name of

⁵⁷⁰ Packer ("The Intellectual", 265f) provides a cautionary response to this practice in Wimber's ministry.

⁵⁷¹ Power Healing, 204; cf. Power Evangelism, 53, 62, 240; some (Anstey, P., "Woodhouse on Wimber", Interchange, 47 (1990) 52-55; Jensen (John..., 9f)) believe Wimber undermines the uniqueness of Scripture; this is due to their unwillingness to accept the possibility of charismatic gifts as detailed in 1 Cor. 12.

⁵⁷² Power Healing, 86, 93, 218f; "The Church...?", 123.

⁵⁷³ Healing '95 Sessions 4, 8, 10.

Zaacheus (Luke 19:2ff).⁵⁷⁴ As a result of this view, Wimber has a precedent for believing that divine knowledge can be available for the believer as it was for Jesus and that the believer, in using it, is following the example of Jesus. However, given their limited reference in the ministry of Jesus, it is difficult to view such revelations as normative or paradigmatic.

Conclusion

Although Wimber is aware of the eschatological tension involved in the participation in the Kingdom, he is unclear as to how this relates to healing. He anticipates the possibility of healing for all believers and provides premises for such a belief. However, he acknowledges that no one has emulated Jesus in his/her healing ministry and this, coupled with his provision of reasons for the absence of healing, distances him from his model, Jesus, who was not obstructed from healing those who requested restoration.

His honest acknowledgement that his healing framework is incomplete is to be contrasted with his readiness to expect people to be healed. Similarly, his construct of healing in the context of evangelism leads to the suggestion that an absence of healing indicates an incomplete and unscriptural form of evangelism, in contrast to that practised by Jesus.

⁵⁷⁴ Wimber, J., "Power Evangelism", (audio-cassette) Anaheim: VMI (1984); for a rebuttal of this view, see Masters, The Healing..., 49ff; cf. Kraft, C.H., Christianity with Power: Your Worldview and your experience of the Supernatural, Ann Arbor: Vine (1989) 73ff.

As with Hagin and Pentecostalism in general, the suggestion that Jesus promised that believers would emulate him and that this is achieved by a parallel endowment of the Holy Spirit overlooks the paucity of New Testament evidence for such a parallel endowment and misunderstands the unique status and mission of Jesus. Compounding the above are further significant dissimilarities between Wimber's healing ministry and that of Jesus which undermine any proposed parallelism or dependency.

Major dissimilarities with Jesus' healing ministry

Faith

As will be demonstrated, faith was of major importance in the context of the healing ministry of Jesus, though Wimber perceives it as having a function that is not evidenced in the ministry of Jesus. He describes it as, "the medium through which God releases his healing power" but offers no further clarification.⁵⁷⁵ He further writes, "An assertive attitude of faith appropriates the benefits of the kingdom",⁵⁷⁶ such a faith being described as "a confidence without need of proof or regard for evidence, a conviction of truth and willingness to stand by it".⁵⁷⁷ Such faith, he ascertains, "must be present in...some other person or persons...the one being prayed for...(or) the one

⁵⁷⁵ Power Healing, 153.

⁵⁷⁶ Healing Seminar..., 9.

⁵⁷⁷ ibid, 25; cf. Power Evangelism, 200.

doing the healing".⁵⁷⁸ So important is the presence of faith that he equates prayer devoid of faith with the statement, "God, I don't know if you want to heal me".⁵⁷⁹ Such statements imply that faith is to be equated with a certainty that one will be healed.

He attempts a definition of the faith that is needed to effect healing by examining Bartimaeus (Mark 10:47-50) who he concludes evidenced "determination, shamelessness and persistence" including a recognition of Jesus "for who he really was, 'the Son of David'" and a belief in God's mercy.⁵⁸⁰ He similarly characterises the faith of the woman with a haemorrhage (Matthew 9:18-22) as demonstrated by her persistent belief that Jesus could heal her.⁵⁸¹

Faith is then to be understood in terms associated with persistency, as a result of which, having proved one's determination to believe that healing will occur, healing is to be expected. Conversely, a lack of such "faith" results in an absence of healing, even for Jesus. Thus, he writes, "When Jesus went home to Nazareth the first time, he basically struck out because of the prevailing unbelief. Even he couldn't overcome it".⁵⁸² He writes, "Jesus seemed to be more able to heal in the presence of faith in Him and in His power to heal...Jesus sometimes healed when He alone believed, but He was clearly limited by an unbelieving (negative faith) atmosphere".⁵⁸³

⁵⁷⁸ Healing Seminar..., 33; cf. Power Healing, 154.

⁵⁷⁹ ibid, 217.

⁵⁸⁰ Healing Seminar..., 32.

⁵⁸¹ ibid, 32.

⁵⁸² "The Church...?", 119.

⁵⁸³ Healing Seminar..., 17.

As will be demonstrated later,⁵⁸⁴ the absence of faith in Nazareth is to be equated with a rejection of him, his ministry and his person by those who knew him. This attitude demonstrates an unwillingness to receive from Jesus. It is not that it restricts Jesus; rather, it provides evidence of an unwillingness to credit Jesus with any valid authority, resulting in an absence of healing on his part. To argue from this that Jesus needed faith to operate is to misunderstand the evidence. Similarly, to conclude that faith acts as a catalyst for healing to occur is not reflective of the ministry of Jesus; on some occasions, he healed in contexts where faith is not mentioned as well as those where it is stressed by the authors. Their absence of faith is to be equated with a rejection of him, not a limited expectation of healing on their part.

Consequently, quoting Mark 5:35-42, he writes, "I look for an atmosphere full of faith and hope" commenting, "I have asked those who are struggling with unbelief, fear or anxiety to leave, while I ask others who I know have faith for healing to join us. I have also observed that frequently one healing is a springboard to many others".⁵⁸⁵ This description of faith appears to be based on a misunderstanding of the significance and meaning of the unbelief present among the people of Nazareth and on an assumption that faith is to be equated with a belief that one will be healed, anything less than this certainty being regarded as a lack of faith, harmful and an obstacle to potential restoration. His description of faith is excessively egocentric; it appears to have the capacity of achieving healing of its own accord.

⁵⁸⁴ pps. 298ff.

⁵⁸⁵ Power Healing, 186.

Furthermore, he believes that "One of the ploys of the enemy is to send some of the symptoms back to make you doubt God's word...when it comes, rebuke it and stand on what Jesus has done for you".⁵⁸⁶ He does not clarify or support this belief, neither is it reflected in the ministry of his apparent model, Jesus. As will be explored, these definitions and descriptions of faith are distanced from the faith commended by Jesus in healing scenarios. However, despite his emphasis on the crucial importance of faith, he writes of the inappropriateness of blaming the sick person of a lack of faith if the sickness is not removed after prayer.⁵⁸⁷ Wimber's views represented here need to be read in the context of later statements in which he notes that despite an absence of faith on the part of those being prayed for, healing may still be secured.⁵⁸⁸ Nevertheless, he did not articulate a clear definition of the meaning of faith that accommodated such a development. As they stand, these views contradict his belief that believers may emulate the healing ministry of Jesus for faith was not always evidenced by those healed by him. They also contradict previously noted statements in which he is less dogmatic in his expectation of healing and those in which he is dismissive of unconditional guarantees of healing.

Sin/Satan

In response to the question why some people do not improve after prayer, he writes, "Some areas could be checked...such as sin, unforgiveness",⁵⁸⁹

⁵⁸⁶ Healing '95 Session 10.

⁵⁸⁷ Power Healing, 186.

⁵⁸⁸ "When cancer...", 40

⁵⁸⁹ Power Healing, 105f; Power Evangelism, 176f.

elsewhere noting that "unbelief or faithlessness"⁵⁹⁰ are other reasons for an absence of healing. He claims, "There are at least 50 categories I know which have to be examined when dealing with people and their lack of healing".⁵⁹¹ Furthermore, he writes, "the principle of dedicating parts of the body to the Lord" is important, arguing, "Sometimes, a residue of the effects of a person's wrongdoing remains in the parts of his or her body that were used in the service of evil".⁵⁹² He also assumes that believers become ill because they are part of a Church that by its sin has "invited the enemy in. With the enemy has come sickness".⁵⁹³ Even though the sufferer may accurately state, "I'm walking close to the Lord at this point, I've confessed all sin that I've any knowledge of. I'd say, yes, but you are an individual connected to a body that is sick". Through no fault of his/her own, the healing is impeded by others. This militates against his view that believers may function as did Jesus, whose ability to heal was not restricted by unbelieving onlookers. He offers no biblical evidence for these perspectives.

Contradictions arise in this context. He writes that sickness is caused by sin, ultimately because of the Fall of man, but not because of personal sins.⁵⁹⁴ Elsewhere, he records, "There are many reasons why people are not healed when prayed for. Most of the reasons involve some form of sin and

⁵⁹⁰ Healing Seminar..., 13; Power Healing, 164.

⁵⁹¹ Hall, "John...", 21; Wright (Gunstone, Meeting..., 52f) rejects this approach believing that "it leads to despair and treats an act of healing as though it were a human accomplishment, achieved by our providing the right condition for it to happen".

⁵⁹² Power Healing, 238.

⁵⁹³ Hall, "John...", 20.

⁵⁹⁴ Healing Seminar..., 12ff.

unbelief".⁵⁹⁵ At the same time, he notes, "The minority of all illnesses in the New Testament are the direct result of habitual sin in the individual".⁵⁹⁶ More importantly, for the purposes of the thesis, he does not reflect the practice or belief of Jesus concerning sin in relation to sickness, Jesus never clearly linking them.

He concludes that much sickness is caused by Satan⁵⁹⁷ or demons.⁵⁹⁸

However, as has been evidenced already, the Biblical evidence for such a premise is very limited. Again, he presents features that are of crucial importance to his healing ministry but which are not reflected in the ministry of Jesus, suggestive of the fact that a different model is in view.

Prayer

His philosophy regarding prayer for healing, which he views as central,⁵⁹⁹ is based on the belief that "Since He's (God) going to heal everybody in the eschaton, why not ask for it now",⁶⁰⁰ though he acknowledges, "whether they get well or not is God's part".⁶⁰¹ This however, contradicts his previously mentioned fundamental beliefs concerning the importance of healing as a reflection of God's nature. The significance of this information is that it marks

⁵⁹⁵ Power Healing, 164.

⁵⁹⁶ ibid, 57

⁵⁹⁷ ibid.

⁵⁹⁸ Power Evangelism, 174.

⁵⁹⁹ "The Church...?", 117f.

⁶⁰⁰ Healing '95 Session 4.

⁶⁰¹ "The Church...?", 119.

another deviation from the practice of Jesus whose ministry is not described as including prayer for the sick. Prayer is encouraged by James (5:16); however, the inclusion of such a feature by Wimber highlights the fact that he recognises an alternative paradigm to that of the healing ministry of Jesus. That which he does not do is to reconcile both in a way that provides a harmonisation of them both, given their distinctives and dissimilar purposes. While advocating Jesus as the model to be emulated, he encourages the believer to follow the guidelines provided by James 5:13-18, despite their discrete features.

His opinion is that persistency in prayer is most important. Thus, he states, "if we had them (people for whom prayer was being offered) five times, we could possibly see all of them healed. We have learned that by praying again and again for people the percentage of those unhealed individuals dwindles".⁶⁰²

However, he states that one should stop praying for a person "when the Holy Spirit indicates that it is over, usually by withdrawing his power" or when the person is not responding "and I notice the sensation associated with healing prayer" is withdrawn.⁶⁰³

His comments concerning prayer suggest that cumulative prayer, or persistency in prayer, act as powerful keys in receiving healing.⁶⁰⁴ This implies

⁶⁰² Hall, "John...", 20; cf. Power Healing, 15.

⁶⁰³ Power Healing, 244; cf. Wimber, J., "The Prayer that is intimacy with God", Renewal, (April 1988) 15f.

⁶⁰⁴ MacNutt (F., The Prayer that heals, London:HS (1991) 61), who conducted healing seminars with Wimber in England in 1996, advocates extended periods of prayer, described as "soaking prayer", beneficial "because the longer the sick area is held in the healing light of God, the more the germs or tumours have to wither up and die" (he supports this view by reference to Lk. 9:8, 18:7f

that they are more effective than single prayers and assumes that God is more responsive to such prayer. The above features are not reflected in the ministry of Jesus. Also, he contradicts previous comments regarding the unlimited power available to believers, to be accessed simply by faith.

Methodology

It is in this area that Wimber's approach becomes most novel in that he introduces to the concept of healing the practice of developing one's skills in "clinics". The purpose of Practical Healing is that the participant may "learn how to pray for the sick",⁶⁰⁵ during a ten week study progressing from being a spectator to a participant to being a trainer.⁶⁰⁶ Although he rejects the suggestion that healing can be guaranteed if a particular methodology is used,⁶⁰⁷ his goal is that "equippers" will be trained who can heal and train others.⁶⁰⁸ The significance of this practice is that though it may be viewed as providing sensitive, pastoral advice and procedures for ministry to the sick, it is

(The Power..., 40...see also 39f, 70)). He also emphasises the importance of corporate prayer, writing, "the corporate presence of God in many believers can bring a greater power" (in England, E. "Anointed with the power to heal", Renewal, 150 (Nov. 1988) 7; MacNutt, Healing, Notre Dame: Ave Maria Press (1974) 305).

⁶⁰⁵ Practical Healing, 85; cf. Power Healing, 189f.

⁶⁰⁶ Practical Healing, 11f; cf. Wagner, C.P., Signs and Wonders Today: The Story of Fuller Theological Seminary's Remarkable Course on Spiritual Power, Altamonte Springs: Creation House (1987); The Third Wave of the Holy Spirit: Encountering the Power of Signs and Wonders, Ann Arbor: Servant Books (1988) 25ff.

⁶⁰⁷ Healing '95 Session 8.

⁶⁰⁸ Healing '95 Session 1; Springer, K., (ed.) Riding the Third Wave: What comes after Renewal, Basingstoke: Marshall Pickering (1981) 251.

not reflected in the ministry of Jesus who healed without a set methodology, the authors of the Gospels choosing not to include such specific guidelines in association with his healing ministry. Although it could be argued that guidelines are delineated by James 5:13-18, it is to be remembered that they offer an alternative to the ministry of Jesus and are to retain their distinctiveness. Again, Wimber is aware of the limited practical implications of the ministry of Jesus and he seeks to augment them with additional measures. Although the latter are valid in contemporary contexts of healing, they demonstrate a readiness to move beyond the apparent paradigm offered by the healing ministry of Jesus while at the same time, no attempted reconciliation of the two is offered.

The people who participate in his healing teams are chosen on the basis of "good character, full of the Holy Spirit - the 1 Timothy 3/Titus 1/Acts 6 type...people who are maturing".⁶⁰⁹ No reasons are offered for this selection grid, though the implication is that those who can minister in healing are assumed to be of exemplary character; such a feature is not specified in the New Testament. Before training them "with a show-and-tell, on-the-job training model", he ascertains, "what kind of healing situations suit this person" noting, "some...excel in inner healing, others in deliverance from Satanic oppression or possession, others in physical disease".⁶¹⁰ Evidence for such diversity of gifting is not provided and distances his praxis from that of Jesus, his apparent

⁶⁰⁹ Wimber, "The Church...?", 123.

⁶¹⁰ *ibid*, 123.

mentor, who left no such methodological guidelines for his followers.⁶¹¹ Such a format of teaching, however sincere, results in an over-technical approach to healing that is not reflected in the ministry of Jesus; this results in attendees assuming that such techniques may be learnt and applied in a causative fashion, effecting healing when correct procedures have been applied.⁶¹² Thus, Kammer⁶¹³ describes him as the "best known...pragmatic evangelist of healing methodology".

Ministry Time

Another important element, anticipated by Wimber in healing scenarios, is described as being a "ministry time" during which, "spiritual power is multiplied...greater insights" are received and "protection for the person praying" is achieved.⁶¹⁴ He describes it as a learning experience, best developed in group situations. During this period, he identifies five stages, the first being the interview where he establishes the request of the sufferer.⁶¹⁵

This is followed by a diagnostic decision which is the procedure of "identifying and clarifying the root of the person's problem" which may result in inner

⁶¹¹ Hart, C., "St. Mark and John Wimber-Allies or Opponents?", Anvil, 10.1 (1993) 62.

⁶¹² cf. Bridge, D., Power Evangelism and the Word of God, Eastbourne:Kingsway (1987) 230.

⁶¹³ Kammer, D., "The Perplexing Power of John Wimber' Power Encounters", Churchman, 106.1 (1992) 55.

⁶¹⁴ Power Healing, 188.

⁶¹⁵ ibid, 209.

healing before any physical healing occurs.⁶¹⁶ He writes, "The reason why people sometimes 'lose' their healing is because the real cause (spiritual, emotional, demonic etc.) has not been dealt with".⁶¹⁷ He thus recommends, "In praying for physical healing, it is important that we listen in order to determine the root cause and the need for prayer. We should listen a: to the person (ask questions) b: to what God is saying (revelation gifts)".⁶¹⁸

Thirdly, he selects the kind of prayer to be offered which he identifies as determining "what God wants me to do at this particular time for this person," noting, "the key to answered prayer is praying according to God's will".⁶¹⁹ It is to be noted that these developed stages of ministry bear little relationship to Jesus' healing ministry and more reflect the teaching of James 5:14ff, a passage that Wimber rarely refers to.⁶²⁰

He notes that accompanying phenomena occur during his meetings and concludes, "they often accompany what the Holy Spirit is doing".⁶²¹ He describes shaking and trembling as occurring, providing Scriptural support.⁶²² He writes, "commonly it is a gentle trembling" though also it could be "a

⁶¹⁶ ibid, 210-213.

⁶¹⁷ Healing Seminar..., 32.

⁶¹⁸ ibid, 32; cf. Power Healing, 164.

⁶¹⁹ Power Healing, 214ff.

⁶²⁰ Masters (The Healing..., 42, 139) describes it as "charismatic experimentation"; Patterson (B., "Cause for Concern", CT, (Aug. 8, 1986) 20) as a form of "Christian magic".

⁶²¹ Power Healing, 227ff.

⁶²² ibid, 225...Gen. 42:28; Ex. 19:16; Ezra 9:4; Ps. 2:11; Is. 66:5; Jer. 5:22; Dan. 10:10f; Matt. 28:4; Mark 5:33; Luke 8:47; Acts 7:32; 1 Cor. 2:3; 2 Cor. 7:15; Phil. 2:12; Heb. 12:21.

shaking of extreme violence...for several hours".⁶²³ Such features are not recorded in the ministry of Jesus.

Medicine

Wimber accepts the value of medicine, quoting Mark 6:13, 7:33, 8:23; John 9:6 and 1 Timothy 5:23 as evidence for its biblical support, writing, "I encourage most of the people I pray for to seek medicinal help, especially if they have a life threatening disease".⁶²⁴ He also provides strong personal support for medicine and doctors, noting that if it was not for them, neither he nor his wife would be alive.⁶²⁵ He writes, after discovering he was suffering from nasal cancer in 1993, that God had warned him it would come and that "he was going to heal me but that he was going to use medicinal means".⁶²⁶ He advises people on medication to visit their doctor if they believe they have been healed.⁶²⁷ In these areas, he shows commendable wisdom.⁶²⁸

Of pertinence to this thesis however, is that he differs from Jesus who, though not denigrating medical practitioners, chose not to refer people to them for

⁶²³ Power Healing, 225.

⁶²⁴ ibid, 151; cf. Healing Seminar..., 12.

⁶²⁵ Healing '95 Session 8.

⁶²⁶ Wimber, J., "Tending the Vineyard", Alpha, (June, 1996) 25.

⁶²⁷ Healing '95 Session 8.

⁶²⁸ Wagner (How to..., 267; cf. Richards, The Church's..., 21; Heron, B., Praying for Healing: The Challenge, London:DLT (1989) 7), representing the majority view of Christians, views medicine as "one of the means the Lord uses to minister healing to those in need" and thus follows the Pauline model in practice whilst claiming to follow Jesus' model (Wagner, C.P., "The Power of God and Your Power", CL, (July 1983) 46).

healing. This dissimilarity to the model of Jesus further indicates that his ministry is distinctive.

Conclusion

Wimber's belief in divine healing is based on his belief in a paradigmatic healing model of Jesus to be emulated by believers as a result of authority delegated to them. However, his praxis indicates significant dissimilarities to that of Jesus which he chooses not to support from the Bible, even though some are reflected therein; similarly, the healing ministry of Jesus is contrasted to his own and contemporary believers on a number of levels, so calling into question his actual premise. As with Hagin, there is surprisingly very limited interaction with the Jacobean guidelines.

JESUS THE HEALER AS A MODEL FOR

PEDAGOGICAL PURPOSES

Pedagogical purposes in representative healing narratives

Introduction

Thus far, a survey and partial analysis of two denominations and two individuals has been undertaken, each maintaining a belief in divine healing. That which is of particular interest to this thesis is the relationship they maintain with the healing ministry of Jesus. It has been demonstrated that undergirding their belief in divine healing is a readiness to acknowledge that Jesus is a paradigm for his followers coupled with a belief that he delegated his healing authority to believers. The latter two issues will now be examined from the perspective of the Gospels. In particular, it will be demonstrated that the healings of Jesus were recorded for purposes other than to indicate a model to be emulated; also, the view that Jesus delegated his healing authority to believers will be analysed. Conclusions drawn, together with the recognition that the proponents of the above views qualify them considerably,

serve to undermine the validity of these beliefs for they lack demonstrable evidence from the biblical source claimed to be their support.

Initially, five representative healing narratives will be examined. Resulting from this, it will be deduced that pedagogical interests form the reason for their inclusion in the Gospels. Thereafter, a survey of all the healing accounts in the Gospels will be provided in order to further demonstrate the fact that paraenesis is the main element in their content and presentation.

Jesus heals a leper

(Matthew 8:2-4//Mark 1:40-45//Luke 5:12-16)

Motifs: **Jesus' authority to heal and incorporate the outcast**

The necessity of obedience for disciples

Introduction

The central feature of the story relates to the authority of Jesus, a characteristic introduced in the baptismal and temptation narratives recorded earlier in each of the Synoptics and emphasised in this story.

The authority of Jesus

The specific identification of the leprosy is uncertain.⁶²⁹ What is of particular significance is the seriousness of the disease, in particular, its link with uncleanness and divine judgement⁶³⁰ which resulted in exclusion from the

⁶²⁹ Luke informs us that he was “full of leprosy” (5:12); cf. Ryrie, C.C., “The Cleansing of the leper”, BS, 113 (July 1956) 262f; Browne, S.G., Leprosy in the Bible, London:Christian Medical Fellowship (1970); Fitzmyer, J.A., The Gospel according to Luke (1-1X), New York:Doubleday (1981) 1.573f.

⁶³⁰ Lev. 13:45f; Num. 12:10ff; Job 18:13; b. Sanh. 471; b. Ned. 64b; b. Kel. 1:4; b. Neg. 13:11, 7; Wars 5:5.6; Ant. 3:11.3; the term “hyssop” is used in the context of cleansing from sin (2 Kings 5:27, 15:5; 2 Chron. 26:21; Ps. 51:7) and the fact that hyssop is part of the cleansing procedure of the leper (Lev. 14:4) suggests that leprosy may be an illustration of sin; b. Arak. 15b, 16a, 16b describes seven sins likely to be punished with leprosy as a result of which the leper must dwell

community and the Temple.⁶³¹ At the same time, it is God alone who is viewed as the one who can heal the disease.⁶³² The implication of 2 Kings 5:8 is that the ability to heal a leper is a sign of being a prophet. These facts are significant, given that Jesus is presented as the healer of the leper, and explain why Matthew places the miracle first in his catalogue of healings. Each fact implies that in coming to Jesus, the leper is presented as being in the presence of a prophetic figure who had the power of God at his disposal since only God could forgive any sins that may have caused the disease, reverse the judgement and restore to life the one who was suffering.⁶³³

Each of the Synoptists record the same words, "thelo katharistheti", expressing the desire and ability of Jesus to heal the man.⁶³⁴ Despite there being no specific request for cleansing, only an affirmation by the man that Jesus had the power to grant it, the leper is restored, such is the supreme authority of Jesus. Although the previous words differ in each of the Synoptics, these

apart for the punishment for the sin must be as harsh as the crime that caused it; cf. Neusner, J., "The Idea of Purity in Ancient Judaism", JAAR, 43 (1975) 21; Purity in Rabbinic Judaism. A Systemic Account, Atlanta: Scholars Press (1994) 64f, 110-113; Davies, M.L., "Levitical leprosy: uncleanness and the psyche", ET, 99.5 (1988) 136-139; Garland (D.E., "I am the Lord your healer: Mark 1:21-2:12", RE, 85.2 (1988) 336f) notes, "The cure of the leper was akin to raising the dead", commenting on the fact that the Targum Onkelos interprets the tattered clothing of the leper (Lev. 13:45) as being a sign of mourning "presumably for the leper's godless life for which he was being punished".

⁶³¹ b. Ned. 64a; cf. Noth, M., Leviticus, Philadelphia: Westminster (1965) 104f.

⁶³² Num. 12:10ff; 2 Kings 5:1ff; Ant. 3.264.

⁶³³ Mark and Luke refer to the intensity of the man's request...Mk. 1:40; Lk. 5:12; Luke uses "δεομαι" (I beg) often elsewhere...8:28, 38; 9:38, 40; 10:2; 21:36; 22:32.

⁶³⁴ Matt. 8:3; Mk. 1:41; Lk. 5:13.

affirmatory words are identical (ean theles dunasai me katharissai) indicating their significance to the narrative.

Each Synoptist records that Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him.⁶³⁵

Although Moses⁶³⁶ and Elisha⁶³⁷ were involved in the healing of lepers, they did not touch them in the process. This is not an incidental detail.⁶³⁸ In so doing, Jesus breaks the Law and also risks ceremonial uncleanness.⁶³⁹ Rather than view this as a deliberate act of provocation designed to undermine the sanctity or importance of the Law, it is preferable to understand it as the commencement of the process of reintegration, to be formally completed by the visit to the priest as delineated by the Law. He touches the untouchable and thus begins the journey of the leper into societal acceptance and involvement.

Harper⁶⁴⁰ suggests that his touching those who are ill is proof of his compassion for outcasts. However, although Mark records that Jesus felt pity for the man, it is probable that the intention in mentioning that Jesus touched the leper was mainly to establish his authority, in view of the fact that leprosy ceremonially contaminated those who came into contact with it. Jesus is above the legalism that marginalises people and immune to ceremonial contamination. Indeed, his status is such that he could re-interpret the Law, as

⁶³⁵ ibid.

⁶³⁶ Num. 12:9-15.

⁶³⁷ 2 Kings 5:1-14.

⁶³⁸ Each of the Synoptists include these words “ἐκτεινας την χειρα ἥψατο αὐτου”; Gundry (Matthew, 13) views the fact that Jesus touches the leper as being central to the story.

⁶³⁹ Lev. 5:3; 13:45f.

⁶⁴⁰ The Healings..., 64f.

he does in this case.⁶⁴¹ He reveals his authority in that he not only reaches out to the marginalised, but he also heals him, thus allowing his reintegration into society.⁶⁴² In this, Jesus not only affirms the man; he also empowers him by centralising him, speaking to him and eventually confirming his faith.

Each of the Synoptics records the words of Jesus that the cleansed man go to the priest as a proof for the people.⁶⁴³ France⁶⁴⁴ offers three possible meanings for this. Either it is for a public proof of the cure,⁶⁴⁵ the responsibility for such residing with the priests;⁶⁴⁶ a proof to the priests that Jesus respects the Old Testament Law⁶⁴⁷ or; a witness to Jesus' Messianic mission as the conqueror of disease.⁶⁴⁸ The second option is unlikely as this is not reflected elsewhere in the Gospels as a significant issue for Jesus. It is possible that this action on the part of Jesus is to give the priests an opportunity to accept him,⁶⁴⁹ though at the same time, it will work against them if they reject him.

⁶⁴¹ Dunn (Jesus..., 77) describes Jesus as being aware of a “transcendent authority which set him above party and (at times) even the Law”; cf. Kazmierski, C.R., “Evangelist and Leper: A Socio-Cultural Study of Mark 1:40-45”, NTS, 38.1 (1992) 37ff.

⁶⁴² So Ukpog, J.S., “Leprosy: Untouchables of the Gospel of Today”, Concilium, (1997/5) 67f; Hagner, Matthew, 199f; Patte, Matthew, 112; Van Eck, E., van Aarde, A.G., “Sickness and Healing in Mark: A Social Scientific Interpretation”, Neutestamentica, 27.1 (1993) 46; Davies, M., Matthew, Sheffield:JSOT Press (1993) 72.

⁶⁴³ Matt. 8:4; Mk. 1:44; Lk. 5:14.

⁶⁴⁴ France, R.T., Matthew, Leicester: IVP (1985) 153.

⁶⁴⁵ So Latourelle, R., The Miracles of Jesus and the Theology of Miracles, New York:Paulist Press (1988) 88.

⁶⁴⁶ Lev. 5:3; 14:2-32; Num. 5:2-4; b. Neg. 3.1; 13.12.

⁶⁴⁷ So Harper, The Healings..., 68; Davies, Matthew, 70; Gundry, Matthew, 138; Patte, The Gospel..., 112.

⁶⁴⁸ Matt. 11:5; cf. France, Matthew, 153; Gundry, Matthew, 140.

⁶⁴⁹ So Hooker, M.D., A Commentary on the Gospel according to St. Mark, London:Black (1991) 82; Ryrie, “The Cleansing...”, 266.

Lane⁶⁵⁰ prefers to believe that it is a testimony against the priests. However, the presentation to the priests is probably for the purpose of demonstrating the integrity of the restoration and its implication; only one bearing divine authority could perform such a deed.

Each of the above features, however they may be understood, coalesce in the affirmation of the authority of Jesus, not just in his ability to heal and restore an outcast and that immediately, a feature recorded by each of the authors,⁶⁵¹ but also in his sending the man to the priests for confirmation of the cleansing with the practical implications of such healing power.

The necessity of obedience

Prior to the occurrence of the healing, the man kneels before Jesus⁶⁵² and addresses him as Lord; both actions are to be recognised as proof of respect or, less likely, a recognition of divinity. However, an attitude of respect has to be tested and Jesus provides the man with an opportunity to demonstrate its quality.

⁶⁵⁰ Lane, Mark, 88; cf. Cave, C.H., “The Leper: Mk. 1:40-45”, NTS, 25 1978f) 249; Mussner (The Miracles..., 36) suggests “against their self righteousness”; Myers, C., Binding the Strong Man: A Political Reading of Mark's Story of Jesus, Maryknoll:Orbis (1988) 153; Broadhead, E.K., “Mark 1,44: The Witness of the Leper”, ZNTW, 83 (1992) 260ff; Broadhead, E.K., “Christology as Polemic and Apologetic: The Priestly Portrait of Jesus in the Gospel of Mark”, JSNT, 47 (1992) 24f.

⁶⁵¹ Matt. 8:3; Mk. 1:42; Lk. 5:13; though this is doubted by Hooker (Mark, 80).

⁶⁵² Luke records that he fell on his face (5:12).

The healing becomes a vehicle of teaching and acts as the basis for a test of obedience for the leper who is instructed to present himself to the priest for official restoration to the community. The quality of the man's obedience will be proved by his response to Jesus' commands which are threefold:- He is to speak to no one;⁶⁵³ he is to go to the priest; and he is to offer the gift necessary for the cleansing process to be completed. The man receives his cleansing, offering nothing other than an affirmation of Jesus' ability to heal him; that which is important to would-be followers of Jesus is the importance Jesus places on obedience to his commands. The disobedience of the man, as recorded by Mark, is omitted by Matthew and Luke, but the relationship between a recognition of authority and its practical outworking in obedience has not been lost by any writer.

The passage forms part of a distinct section in Matthew.⁶⁵⁴ Bruner⁶⁵⁵ comments, "Matthew is trying to say something" offering by way of explanation, "we feel very unclean after the sermon", hence the story of the cleansing of the leper. Although Bruner is right to identify a significant purpose in the placing of this miracle at this juncture, it is for a different reason than that which he offers.

⁶⁵³ Nolland (J., Luke 1-9:20, Dallas: Word (1989) 228) suggests this was due to the need to quickly go to the priest for confirmation of cleansing; Onwu (N., "Don't mention it': Jesus' instruction to healed persons", AJBS, 1 (1986) 35ff) suggests that the command to silence in Mark was due to Jesus' unwillingness to receive praise that lacked personal commitment; however, the uncertainty of the reason for the instruction is less important than its presence as an opportunity to express obedience.

⁶⁵⁴ cf. Held, "Matthew...", 234ff; Thompson, W.G., "Reflections on the Composition of Matthew 8:1-9:34", CBQ, 33 (1971) 368-387; Burger, C., "Jesu Taten nach Mattheus 8, 9", ZTK, 70 (1973) 272-287; Kingsbury, "Observations...", 559-573.

⁶⁵⁵ Bruner, Matthew, 299f.

Pedagogically, this narrative describes the necessity of commitment in discipleship. Given that the previous passage (7:24-28) deals with the importance of listening to and obeying the words of Jesus, while the following verses (5-12) relate to a recognition of the authority of Jesus, this healing account provides Matthew with the opportunity to stress the importance of obedience. The validity of obedience to Jesus is proven by the demonstration of his supreme wisdom and revelation, as revealed in Matthew 5-7, to be again indicated by his powerful deeds (chs. 8, 9). He is the authoritative Son of God (1:23; 2:15; 3:17; 4:3, 6) who is to be obeyed. The motif of obedience is developed further in Matthew in that wherever Jesus goes, Jews, having been given the opportunity to follow him, do so (8:1, 10, 19, 22, 23; 9:9).⁶⁵⁶

The motif of obedience also undergirds the story as recorded by Mark, given the stern charge that Jesus gives the man to tell no one.⁶⁵⁷ Strikingly, Mark

⁶⁵⁶ cf. Kingsbury, J.D., "The verb ἄκολουθεῖν ('to follow') as an index of Matthew's view of his community", *JBL*, 97 (1978) 56-73.

⁶⁵⁷ Mark (1:43) alone records the strong reaction by Jesus; cf. Lake (K., "EMBRIMESAMENOS and ORGISTHEIS, Mk. 1:40-45", *HTR*, 16 (1923) 197f) suggests a reference to anger on the part of Jesus; Cave ("The Leper...", 247) creates the wrong impression in his translation, "he roared at them"; Telford (G.B., "Mark 1:40-45", *Interpretation*, 36.1 (1982) 54ff) indicates that Jesus may have been angry at the leper's interruption of his preaching mission. However, although the verb can contain an element of anger (Lam. 2:6; Dan. 11:30; Mk. 14:5; Jn. 11:33,38), it is inappropriate in a setting of healing unless it clearly relates to anger felt about the disease; Mussner (*The Miracles...*, 35) views it as anger at the injustice done to the lepers in Israel, though provides no evidence; Bonner (C., "Traces of Thaumaturgic Technique in the Miracles", *HTR*, 20 (1927) 176-181) views the term as an indication of the work of a magician, suggesting its use in John 11:33 as evidence, though provides little support for this view; Kee (H.C., "Aretalogy and Gospel", *JBL*, 92 (1973) 402-22) suggests a technical meaning indicating the subduing of a demon, followed by the use of the term "ἐχέβαλλον", though the narrative does not reflect an exorcism; Maddocks (M., *The Christian Healing Ministry*, London: SPCK (1981) 37) suggests that the use of "ἐμβριμεσάμενος" (v. 43) is a sign of

records his disobedience, as a result of which, "Jesus could no longer openly enter a town".⁶⁵⁸ The leper failed to learn his lesson; Mark desires that his readers fare better.

Luke, in contrast to Matthew, places the story before the Sermon on the Mount but significantly, after the call of the first disciples. For Luke also, obedience is worked out in following the Master and acts as a very important element in the narrative. He earlier records Peter (v. 8) falling on his knees before Jesus and asking him to depart from him, such was the recognition of his own sinfulness. Jesus responds by calming his fears and promising him a future mission akin to his own, Luke concluding with the statement that Peter followed Jesus. In the story that follows, the leper, who also falls before Jesus and also calls him "Lord", is cleansed. He receives the touch of Jesus, a mark of gracious acceptance and is also sent as a witness to the power of Jesus, as a result of which, many hear Jesus and receive healing. His witness to Jesus, despite his formerly being an unclean leper, and that of Peter, despite the recognition of

Christ's indignation at the disease; however, it is not a description of Christ's emotional response to the condition but represents the gravity of the command to the man, the refusal to obey resulting in serious consequences; Gundry (R.H., Mark: A Commentary on His Apology for the Cross, Grand Rapids:Eerdmans (1993) 96) notes that neither "ἐχέβαλλον" nor "ἐμβριμεσάμενος" are used negatively by Mark nor to express displeasure and he correctly concludes that Mark's comment that Jesus "sternly charged" the man is to emphasise the significance of obedience to the mind of Jesus.

⁶⁵⁸ Mk. 1:45; cf. Elliott (J.K., "The Conclusion of the Pericope of the Healing of the Leper and Mark 1:45", JTS, 22 (1971) 153-157; "The Healing of the Leper in the Synoptic Parallels", TZ, 34 (1978) 175f) argues that v. 45 is a separate paragraph unrelated to the previous pericope but linked to v. 38, though the evidence is insubstantial, lacking manuscript support.

his own uncleanness is indicative that such a vocation may be undertaken by the readers, obedience, not perfection, being the key issue.

Luke does not specify whether the people who clamoured to Jesus in order to receive healing were restored.⁶⁵⁹ Indeed, Jesus appears to withdraw from a ministry situation and devotes himself to prayer. Not only is the motif of prayer significant to Luke, but also he again reminds the readers that the priority for the one commissioned by God is that s/he must listen for direction and not be pressurised by the dictates or even needs of humanity. It is of no surprise thus to see that the next reference to Jesus is of him teaching.⁶⁶⁰ For Jesus also, obedience to the Father dictates his agenda.

Conclusion

As far as the “multi-dimensional”⁶⁶¹ purposes of the passage as presented in each of the Synoptics, the following observations may be noted. Jesus’ authority to heal and restore the outcast is demonstrated while he is also presented ministering to those who were peripheral to Jewish perceptions. Appositely, Patte⁶⁶² comments, “A proper acknowledgement of Jesus’ authority is more than an acknowledgement of his power”. Thus, the commands to the

⁶⁵⁹ 5:15f.

⁶⁶⁰ 5:17.

⁶⁶¹ Heil, J.P., “Significant Aspects of the healing miracles in Matthew”, CBQ, 41 (1979) 279.

⁶⁶² Matthew, 113.

leper after the healing are to be recognised as being of particular significance to the message of the story. Such authority demands a response.

It is to be recognised that it is the teaching, not the healing, in the narratives that is of first importance. The previous context of Matthew in its concentration on listening to and obeying the words of Jesus, the reflection in Mark of the man's disobedience and its results and the previous passage in Luke, as well as the reference to the withdrawal of Jesus to pray, all suggest the importance of obedience to each of the authors. Obedience is of fundamental importance to the one who is commissioned by God; healing, though important in the ministry of Jesus, is not the priority.

Jesus heals a paralytic

(Matthew 9:1-8//Mark 2:1-12//Luke 5:17-26)

Motif: **The authority of Jesus to forgive sins**

Introduction

The claim of Jesus to be able to forgive sins is assumed by the Scribes to be blasphemy. That it is not recorded as simply an arbitrary testimony of healing seems clear. Deviation from the central Markan chronology is not the only guarantee of a teaching motif. Each gospel account has a pedagogical value, of use to the author for the benefit of his community, revealing the quality of the person and ministry of Jesus. Each Synoptist records that although the opposition question his authority amongst themselves, he understands their thoughts and offers them a question, followed by a miracle of healing to prove that his verbal forgiveness of sins is not a forlorn claim but is backed by the same authority as that which effects a healing.

Why does Matthew tell the story?

Matthew places this story after the exorcism of the Gadarene demoniacs as the sixth of nine miracles. Characteristically, Matthew's account is shorter than

those of Mark and Luke. The introductory details are omitted, priority being given to the interaction between Jesus, the paralytic and the religious bystanders, the central theme again relating to the divine authority of Jesus, Matthew alone incorporating the term "authority" (ἐξουσία) twice (vs. 6, 8) and applying it to Jesus.

Matthew records that Jesus recognised the faith of those concerned. Their faith is to be understood as being revealed by their readiness to bring the man to Jesus, recognising that he had authority to help.⁶⁶³ The authority of Jesus is confirmed by his ability to deal with their request and meet the unmentioned need of forgiveness.

Why do Mark and Luke tell the story?

Luke follows the order of Mark and records this account after the cleansing of the leper. The contrast between the previous miracle and the present one for them both, though less certain in Luke, is that the paralytic was obedient to the command of Jesus, whereas the leper was not.⁶⁶⁴ Luke specifically records his obedience in returning to his house, as requested by Jesus (v. 25b). Following this is the call of Levi, characterised by an immediate response and readiness to leave all and follow Jesus.⁶⁶⁵

⁶⁶³ cf. Gundry, Matthew, 162.

⁶⁶⁴ That Mark (alone) mentions Jesus returning to Capernaum reminds the readers of 1:21-28 where his authority was previously demonstrated.

⁶⁶⁵ Talbert (C.H., Reading Luke, London:SPCK (1982) 63) believes that Luke's purpose in recording the healing of the paralytic followed by the call of Levi is to

However, whereas in the healing of the leper, the cleansing is physical with the hint of a fuller cleansing available, that latter quality of wholeness is made obvious in the healing of the paralytic, for Jesus forgives his sins as well as healing his body. The comprehensive nature of Jesus' salvation is thus developed in these two consecutive accounts.

The healing, though important to the paralytic and those who carried him, is itself the carrier of other lessons. In Mark and Luke, the healing is secondary to the authority claimed by Jesus to forgive sins;⁶⁶⁶ in Matthew, it also indicates the importance of faith; in each, the central aspect of the narratives reflects on the issue of the authority of Jesus to forgive sins.⁶⁶⁷

The entrance of the paralytic

Matthew simply records the fact that the paralytic was carried on a bed to Jesus by some people, Mark noting that four men carried him, while both Mark and Luke describe their inability to get near to Jesus because of the crowds, as a result of which they lowered him through the roof. Both Mark and Luke place the healing in the context of Jesus preaching the word (Mark) and

show Jesus as one who restores social outcasts (cf. 5:12-14, 31f), for which see later.

⁶⁶⁶ cf. Boobyer, G.H., "Mark 2:10a and the interpretation of the healing of the paralytic", *HTR*, 47 (1954) 120; Vannorsdall, J., "Mark 2:1-12", *Interpretation*, 36.1 (1982) 59; Dwyer, T., *The Motif of Wonder in the Gospel of Mark*, Sheffield:Sheffield Academic Press (1996) 99.

⁶⁶⁷ cf. Kuthirakkattel, S., *The Beginning of Jesus' Ministry according to Mark's Gospel (1,14-3,6): A Redaction Critical Study*, Rome:Pontifical Biblical Institute (1990) 181.

teaching (Luke), Luke recording that there were Pharisees and Scribes from "every village of Galilee and Judea and from Jerusalem" (5:17). This was a large crowd with a significant gathering of religious leaders, of importance as a literary marker for it sets the scene for the important claims to be made by Jesus.

Luke includes the statement, "The power (dunamis) of the Lord was with him to heal" (5:17). Of particular importance, this indicates that the power of God was channelled through Jesus on specific occasions, as here,⁶⁶⁸ reminiscent of the Isaianic prophecy referred to himself by Jesus⁶⁶⁹ and the Lukan theme of power.⁶⁷⁰ The significance of this is in identifying the source of his power. It was the power of God operated by Jesus for the benefit of others.⁶⁷¹ Such authority demands an assessment by the many present.

The response by Jesus

Jesus offers forgiveness of sins, despite the absence of a confession, and to the paralytic alone, though faith is exhibited by the others. That this occurs in the context of a need of physical healing has caused comment. What is at issue is not only whether Jesus had the authority to heal and, more importantly, to announce God's forgiveness, but whether he had the authority

⁶⁶⁸ Nolland, Luke, 1.234; cf. Scott, M., Healing then and now, Milton Keynes: Word (1993) 36.

⁶⁶⁹ Lk. 4:18.

⁶⁷⁰ Lk. 4:14, 36; 6:19

⁶⁷¹ Ellis, E.E., The Gospel of Luke, Greenwood: Attic Press (1981) 104.

to determine when and on what basis this forgiveness should be granted. It is this latter aspect that is of particular significance to Mark who, with his major focus on the crucifixion and its importance for the forgiveness of mankind, demonstrates, at the beginning of Jesus' ministry, the authority he has that only belongs to God - the authority to forgive sins.⁶⁷²

That which has preceded the forgiveness of the paralytic is not repentance but faith, used here for the first time by Luke. The identity of that faith is not clarified though it appears to be linked to the confidence of those concerned to present an insurmountable problem to Jesus in order that he might solve it.⁶⁷³

Each Synoptist records that Jesus' initial words to the paralytic were prompted by his perception of "their faith", a clear reference to the faith of more than the paralytic alone, though it is not necessarily to be assumed that the paralytic was excluded as one who had no faith. Whereas the narrative material does not record identical phraseology in all the Synoptic accounts, the words of Jesus are remarkably similar, suggesting a determination to include as faithfully as possible his speech which refers to faith.

⁶⁷² cf. Vannorsdall, "Mark 2:1-12", 58ff.

⁶⁷³ cf. Lane, Mark, 93; Taylor, V., The Gospel according to St. Mark, London: Macmillan (1952) 194; Cabannis, A., "A Fresh Exegesis of Mk. 2:1-12", Interpretation, 11 (1957) 325; Fitzmyer, Luke, 1.582; Hagner, Matthew, 1.232; Nolland, Luke, 1.235; Gundry, Mark, 116; Guelich, R.A., Mark 1-8:26, Dallas: Word (1989) 85.

The fact that forgiveness of sins is offered to the paralytic is suggestive of the fact that he also expressed faith in Jesus;⁶⁷⁴ however, the text does not confirm this.⁶⁷⁵ The writers present the determined willingness to come to Jesus for help as the qualification of significance to Jesus, to be identified with the faith that he desires and which precedes restoration, both spiritual and physical. The previous reference to faith in Matthew (8:10) refers to the confidence of the Gentile centurion to trust Jesus while the previous reference to faith in Mark (1:15) refers to faith in the Gospel; in Luke, it is the first reference to faith, though the earlier references to "belief" (1:20, 45) are located in the context of trust in the person of Jesus. Although the narrators only inform their readers that the seekers anticipate physical healing, the authority of Jesus is presented as providing that and more. It is not faith that produces the miracle of forgiveness but the status and authority of Jesus. He alone has the ability to grant forgiveness. He alone is able to determine the greater need and to meet it. The story illustrates that he is worthy of their faith and indeed, is worthier than they initially realise.

What is important to each account is not the identification of faith or the restoration of "social wholeness",⁶⁷⁶ but the significance of forgiveness of sins

⁶⁷⁴ cf. Davies and Allison (Matthew, 2.88) suggest, "presumably, he was a consenting party and also had faith".

⁶⁷⁵ Nevertheless, Cranfield (C.E.B., The Gospel according to Mark, Cambridge: CUP (1959) 84) prefers to believe that the faith involved "a real decision with regard to his person", not whether he would heal or not.

⁶⁷⁶ cf. Myers, Binding..., 155. Social integration would have been achieved by such a restoration, Harrison ("παράλυτικός", NIDNTT, 3.999f) commenting on the ban on such people from the priesthood and from full absorption into Qumran.

to the ministry of Jesus.⁶⁷⁷ The healing is described as being granted as a secondary benefit to prove Jesus' authority. The use of the present passive tense ("ἄφιεῖται") in Matthew and Mark to describe the forgiveness of the man suggests that it is occurring at that moment⁶⁷⁸ while the perfect passive ("ἄφέωνται") in Luke offers the suggestion that the forgiveness has occurred. The words, only recorded in Matthew, "take heart" (θαρσεῖ) may be translated, "don't be afraid".⁶⁷⁹ They are words of affirmation, not exhortation, for the forgiveness of sins (and healing) are assured. Jesus is viewed as the one authorised to forgive sins and it is the capacity of Jesus to forgive sins that forms the reason for the inclusion of this narrative.⁶⁸⁰

Jesus' words to the Scribes

Some have advocated the view that the illness has been caused by sin,⁶⁸¹ though this is not certain from the textual evidence; even if it is, it is uncertain if

⁶⁷⁷ cf. Garland, "I am...", 338f; Heil, "Significant...", 277; Dupont, J., "Le paralytique pardonne", NRT, 82 (1960) 940ff.

⁶⁷⁸ cf. Blass, F., Debrunner, A., Funk, R.W., A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature, Chicago:University of Chicago Press (1961) 167; Gundry, Matthew, 163; Hagner, Matthew, 232; Cranfield, Mark, 97; Taylor, Mark, 195; Hiebert, D.E., Mark: A Portrait of a Servant, Chicago:Moody (1974) 65; Juel (D.H., Mark, Minneapolis:Augsburg (1990) 47) suggests a divine passive is in mind here as a result of which, Jesus is stating that God has forgiven the man.

⁶⁷⁹ 9:22; cf. Hagner, Matthew, 230; Arndt, W.F., Gingrich, F.W., A Greek English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature, Cambridge: CUP (1957) 352.

⁶⁸⁰ cf. Dupont, "Le Paralytique...", 940ff.

⁶⁸¹ cf. Branscomb, H., "Mark 2:5, 'Son thy sins are forgiven'", JBL, 53 (1934) 54; Davids, P., "A Biblical View of the Fruits of Sin", The Kingdom and the Power, (eds.) Greig, G.S., Springer, K., Ventura:Regal (1995) 117; Patte, Matthew, 125; Cranfield, Mark, 97f; Garland, "I am...", 338; Taylor, Mark, 195; Caird

this is in proportion to the sin.⁶⁸² However, it is probable that the purpose of this pericope is to show Jesus deliberately initiating the discussion that is to come by granting the forgiveness of sins which will bring a questioning reaction from the religious leaders watching. It would be uncharacteristic of Jesus to attempt to identify a link between sin and consequent suffering. Mark and Luke both describe the Scribes sitting, with the implication that they were being taught by or listening to Jesus. That which is to be determined is whether they will accept his teaching.

Rabbinic tradition assumed that sin would not be forgiven nor sickness be healed until the sin was confessed.⁶⁸³ Jesus, however, pronounces forgiveness when no confession had been offered. That the Scribes ascribed blasphemy to the words of Jesus suggests that they understood Jesus' words to be more than simply declaring that God had forgiven the man, though such a claim itself could be criticised given the apparent lack of repentance on his part. Rather, they believe that he is arrogating a prerogative associated with God alone.

(G.B., The Gospel of Luke, Harmondsworth:Penguin (1963) 94) views it as resulting from sin, but psychosomatically based (pace Fitzmyer, Luke, 1.580); Marshall (Luke, 213) notes the possibility that it could refer to sickness caused by sin or resulting from man sharing in universal human sinfulness; Hooker (Mark, 85) appears to suggest that the paralysis is caused by guilt; also, Dwyer, The Motif..., 99; Basset, L., "La culpabilité, paralysie du coeur. Réinterprétation du récit de la guérison du paralyse (Lc. 5:17-26)", ETR, 71.3 (1996) 331ff; Lane (Mark, 94) rejects a link with guilt; Borgen (P., "Miracles of Healing in the New Testament", ST, 35.2 (1981) 91-106) argues that Jesus, to a large extent, broke with the Jewish idea of sickness being a form of divine retaliation.

⁶⁸² cf. Hiebert, Mark, 64; Williams, J.F., Other Followers of Jesus: Minor Characters as Major Figures in Mark's Gospel, Sheffield:JSOT Press (1994) 100.

⁶⁸³ b. Ned. 41a.

In what is another reference to his authority, each Synoptist records Jesus supernaturally perceiving their thoughts, a capacity elsewhere reflected in the character of God,⁶⁸⁴ whereupon he provides them with a rhetorical question as to whether it is easier to heal or forgive sin.⁶⁸⁵ It might be assumed that to offer forgiveness of sins is easier⁶⁸⁶ for such a gesture cannot be validated, while a statement that a healing will occur can be tested. Two main interpretations are available. The first involves the possibility that the sickness was caused by personal sin.⁶⁸⁷

Since the ability to heal does not necessarily carry with it the authority to forgive sins, it is possible that the sickness was caused by sin. By healing the man, Jesus is shown to have dealt with the underlying cause as well, his sin that needs to be forgiven. Thus, Jesus acknowledges the interrelationship between sickness and sin, at least on this occasion, and demonstrates that he has the authority to forgive sins, the healing of the man's sickness that has apparently been caused by sin, providing the proof.

However, it is uncertain as to whether the paralysis was caused by personal sin. The relationship between sin and consequent suffering was accepted in

⁶⁸⁴ 2 Chron. 6:30; Ps. 7:9; Jer. 11:30; Sir. 43:18f; Lk. 2:35.

⁶⁸⁵ Garland ("I am...", 338) suggests he is in effect asking "which is less important?" with the intention of showing that "the forgiveness of sins is absolutely essential before healing can take place"; contra Green, Luke, 241.

⁶⁸⁶ Uth, "An Eschatological...", 169; Ross, R., "Was Jesus saying something or doing something?", BT, 41.4 (1990) 441; Harrington, D.J., The Gospel of Matthew, Collegeville:Liturgical Press (1991) 122.

⁶⁸⁷ cf. Doughty, D.J., "The Authority of the Son of Man", ZNTW, 74 (1983) 166; Hurtado, L.W., Mark, Peabody:Hendrickson (1989) 23.

Jewish⁶⁸⁸ and Christian communities⁶⁸⁹ and it was believed in both that to remedy the one was to remedy the other. However, although a link is possible, it is not necessarily so. Although suffering was ordained by God as an act of chastisement or discipline in order to develop maturity,⁶⁹⁰ more natural causes of sickness and suffering were also recognised by the Jews.⁶⁹¹ Indeed, the many regulations in Levitical law concerning hygiene and sanitary conditions show that illness was not always attributed to sin.⁶⁹² Also, godly men were afflicted with sicknesses that were not a result of any unrighteousness on their part.⁶⁹³ More importantly, Jesus is not recorded as clearly associating sickness with personal sin and on occasions, he refutes the idea.

⁶⁸⁸ Ex. 20:25; Deut. 5:9; 2 Kgs. 20:1ff; Job 33:19; Ps. 89:33; Isa. 33:24; Wis. 11:16; De Mig. Abr. 206; De Vit. Mos. 2.235; Ant. 18.325; Tobit 3:3f; Test. Reu. 1.7; Test. Sim. 2.12; Mid. Gen. 33:3; Lev. 17:3; Eccles. 15.2.1; b. Shab. 55a, 132a; Pes. 112b; Ber. 5a; San. 101a; Ned. 41a; 1 QS. 1.23ff; 1 QH. 2.8; Gen. R. 63.6 interprets Gen. 25:22 as revealing how an unborn child can suffer physical deformity through the action of the mother (cf. SS. R. 1.41; Ruth R. 6.4); the 6th of the 18 Benedictions details a prayer for forgiveness while the 7th and 8th offer prayers in times of affliction and for healing. It is possible that the close proximity of these issues assumes a connection. Schurer (E., The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Christ Vol. 3, London: T. & T. Clark (1986)) discusses the connection between sin and suffering though mainly sees it in terms of eschatological judgement (2:540-546); cf. Brongers, H.A., “Enkele opmerkingen over het verband tussen zonde en ziekte enerzijds en vergeving en genezing anderzijds in het Oude Testament”, NTT, 6.3 (Feb., 1952) 129-142; Gelot, P., “Une tosephtha targoumique sur Gen. 22 dans un manuscrit liturgique dans la Geniza du Caire”, REJ, 16 (1957) 24; Horsley, G.H.R., (NDIEC) The Ancient History Documentary Research Centre: MacQuarie University (1987ff) 2:23; 3:6, 15, 27.

⁶⁸⁹ Jn. 5:14; Acts 5:4ff; 1 Cor. 11:30; Purdy, V., “Biblical Anthropology and the Pentecostal doctrine of Divine Healing”, SPS Papers, Pentecostalism in the Context of the Holiness Revival, (1988) 212-222.

⁶⁹⁰ Ex. 9:14; Num. 14:37; 1 Sam. 25:36ff; 1 Kgs. 13:4-6; Ps. 31(32):4f; Mid. Gen. 26:6; Ex. 31:3; Lev. 29:2; Deut. 3:2; S.S. 12.16.2.

⁶⁹¹ 2 Sam. 4:4; 2 Kgs. 4:18-20; Sir. 34:20ff; 37:29ff; Jn. 9:1-3; Mid. Gen. 8:13.

⁶⁹² Lev. 11; Deut. 14:3-21; 23:13f.

⁶⁹³ 1 Kgs. 15:11-15, 23; Job 1:1ff.

Therefore, rather than assuming that the man's paralysis is due to sin on his part, it is more likely that Jesus is basing his question on their beliefs that all illnesses result from personal sin and that only God has the authority to forgive sins.⁶⁹⁴ On both counts, neither option presented to them by Jesus may be classed as easy; they are as both as difficult as the other; indeed, other than for God, both are impossible. Whichever they state is the easier, Jesus could respond positively; by healing the man, he proves that he has authority to heal illness, but also, he simultaneously demonstrates his authority to deal with the sin, the apparent cause of the illness; by healing the illness, by implication, the underlying sin must have been forgiven.

It is this latter element that forms the central purpose of the record by the Synoptists of this miracle. When Jesus healed, but more particularly, when he claimed to forgive sins and that of a sick person who had apparently done nothing to deserve the forgiveness of sins, it brought into focus the significance of his person and ministry. Jesus is not seeking to combat the perception that sin results in sickness; rather, the value of the pericope is that it reveals that Jesus has come to deal with both and that he does so with authority and ease.⁶⁹⁵ Although the apparent, major need of the man is healing, Jesus chooses to resolve what is the actual major problem, that of unforgiven sin, and consequently forgives him, choosing to heal him

⁶⁹⁴ cf. Thomas, The Devil..., 175f; Fitzmyer, Luke, 1.580.

⁶⁹⁵ cf. Hagner (Matthew, 232) who states, "the point of this narrative is that the problem of sin, though not as apparent to the eye as paralysis, is a fundamental... problem of humanity that Jesus has come to counteract".

afterwards.⁶⁹⁶ Both Matthew (9:6) and Luke (5:24) amend the record of Mark (2:10) so that the identity of the authority of Jesus (to forgive sins) is reserved to the end of the clause for emphasis.

The healing is thus an opportunity for Jesus to declare himself as the bringer of the Kingdom with the transforming power to forgive sins and initiate a new reign. As such, Jesus is the focus of attention in that he initiates the salvific transformation. The suggestion by Thomas⁶⁹⁷ that their faith is equivalent to repentance and belief in the Gospel (1:15) introduces an interpretation of the term "faith" that is inappropriate to the text at this juncture. The forgiveness of sins is not triggered off by repentance but by Jesus' recognition that this is what is the greatest need. Their faith in Jesus is identified as a readiness to believe he can heal; he demonstrates his ability and authority to do even more. They are not coming to a prophet who speaks on behalf of God but to one who uniquely reflects God.⁶⁹⁸ As Heil⁶⁹⁹ notes, "Both healing and forgiveness require the authoritative power of God, now operative in Jesus".

Thus, it is significant to note that each of the accounts refer to Jesus testifying to himself as the Son of Man.⁷⁰⁰ This is the first occasion in which the term is

⁶⁹⁶ Luke uses "παράδοχα" (5:26), only used here in the NT; there was a certain incongruity about the action of Jesus in forgiving someone, offering a moral healing before a physical healing; cf. Rich, A.T., "Luke 5:26", ET, 44 (1932-33) 428; cp. Dabb, J.H.M., "Luke 5:26", ET, 45 (1933-34) 45.

⁶⁹⁷ The Devil..., 140f.

⁶⁹⁸ cf. Riggins, W., "Jesus and the Scriptures: Two Short Notes", Themelios, 16. 2 (1991) 15.

⁶⁹⁹ Heil, J.P., The Gospel of Mark as a Model for Action, New York:Paulist Press (1992) 60.

⁷⁰⁰ Matt. 9:6; Mk. 2:10; Lk. 5:24.

used of Jesus in Mark and Luke. It is to be recognised that the immediate context of the term "Son of Man" is crucial to the message, dealing with the unique authority of Jesus to forgive sins.⁷⁰¹ The following occasions in which Mark (2:28) and Luke (6:6) use the title are also in the context of authority - over the Sabbath while Matthew next records the title to refer to an eschatological figure (10:23). The title is used with a divine emphasis. This coupled with the fact that the word "ἐχουσια" has twice been referred to Jesus thus far (1:21,27) serves to accentuate the importance of this passage to the overall pericope as a means of stressing his authority and thereby his status and person.

It is significant to note that each Synoptist records the response of the people stating that they glorified God though it is not certain if this is due to the forgiveness or the healing of the man.⁷⁰² Matthew and Luke describe the people being in awe/fear as a result of that which they had witnessed. Mark and Luke refer to the reasons for the sense of awe, Mark stating that they had never seen anything like this before while Luke notes that they had witnessed unusual events. In the light of Jesus' having exorcised a demoniac previously in Capernaum (Mark 1:21ff), this miracle is viewed by Mark as being greater. This enforces the lesson that the reader is being introduced to someone who is

⁷⁰¹ cf. Boobyer, "Mark 2, 10a...", 120; Murphy-O'Connor, J., "Peche et Communauté dans le Nouveau Testament", RB, 74 (1967) 182; Hay, L.S., "The Son of Man in Mark 2:10 and 2:28", JBL, 89 (1970) 71; Green, Luke, 242; Kingsbury, J.D., Conflict in Luke. Jesus, Authorities, Disciples, Minneapolis:Fortress Press (1991) 73ff.

⁷⁰² Mead (R.T., "The Healing of the Paralytic: A Unit?", JBL, 80 (1961) 353f) assumes the latter; cf. Vannorsdall, "Mark...", 61.

uniquely special. Matthew alone characteristically includes the reason for their reaction as that God had given authority (ἐξουσία) to men.

Conclusion

The following observations may be noted concerning the specific purposes of the passage as presented in each of the Synoptics. The authority of Jesus is of paramount importance in the narratives concerned. Although they each record the presence of faith, it is not viewed as the catalyst for the healing of the paralytic; neither does Jesus commend the people for their faith nor initially meet their obvious desire for the healing of their companion. Rather, Jesus exposes the authoritative nature of his personage by identifying the greater need of the paralytic, that of forgiveness, and meets it first. The healing is granted secondarily, mainly to demonstrate his authority to those who have not expressed the faith of those who brought the sick man.

The response to such authority is emphasised by each writer in that the paralytic is recorded as obeying Jesus' command to return home. The possibility of a positive response to Jesus is available to all. Mark and Luke present the religious leaders questioning the words of Jesus; it is only Matthew (9:4) who anticipates a possible negative element. Thus, for the former two Synoptists, at least, the Pharisees and Scribes are presented considering the issues concerned; only later will that turn into cynical doubt and rejection (Mk.

3:1-6 though see 12:34; Lk. 5:30, 6:2, 7 esp. 11).⁷⁰³ The Synoptists will progressively reveal that for some, the potential to acknowledge the unique authority of Jesus is never actualised.

⁷⁰³ cf. Beernaert, P.M., "Jesus controversy: structure et theologie de Mark 2, 1-3, 6", NRT, 95 (1973) 129ff; Dewey, J., "The Literary Structure of the Controversy Stories in Mark 2:1-3:6", JBL, 92 (1973) 394-401. Thomas' (The Devil..., 141f) view that they were already antagonistic is unproven, being based on Mk. 1:22.

Jesus heals a woman with a haemorrhage

(Matthew 9:20-22//Mark 5:25-34//Luke 8: 43-48)

Motifs: The importance of faith

**Jesus' authority over purity laws resulting in his
incorporating the outcast**

Introduction

Because of her physical condition, the woman concerned would have been socially and ceremonially unclean and in danger of defiling any who came into contact with her.⁷⁰⁴ It is her social predicament that is more pressing than her physical condition; the latter is not life threatening but it is socially isolating.

The statement that she had suffered, her condition worsening as a result of the attention of many doctors who had presumably attempted a cure, is omitted by Matthew and Luke, Luke more blandly recording that no one could remedy her situation.

⁷⁰⁴ Lev. 12:1-8; 15:19-30; 20:18; 1QTemple 48:14-17.

The importance of faith

Characteristically, Matthew's account is the shortest (48 words), comment being provided on the woman's condition and healing, but emphasis being placed on the statements recorded of the woman and Jesus, in which figure the words "faith" (πίστις) and "I save" (σώζω). Although Jesus is with his disciples, Matthew focuses attention on Jesus and the woman only.⁷⁰⁵

Any uncertainty on the part of Jesus as to who touched him or any suggestion that power left him without his permission⁷⁰⁶ or even the perception of the woman that she had been healed is omitted by Matthew. That which matters to the author is the presentation of Jesus as the Master of all situations who sovereignly bestows healing in response to faith, redeeming people from hopeless situations; in this case, ceremonial uncleanness, in the previous narrative, death.

In Matthew's account, the healing is not recorded until after the words of Jesus affirming that her action was actually an expression of faith (in Mark, it occurs at the moment she touches Jesus' garment). Until this is pronounced, the

⁷⁰⁵ The unique element of the Lucan record is that he does not record any direct speech of the woman, restricting it to the person of Jesus instead. Jesus is central to the Lukan narrative also.

⁷⁰⁶ Gundry (Mark, 270) argues, "Mark portrays Jesus as so charged with power that it will go out from him even apart from his will"; cf. Brown, M.L., Israel's Divine Healer, Carlisle: Paternoster (1995) 212; contra Lane, Mark, 193; Hooker, Mark, 149; Cranfield, Mark, 185; van der Loos, C.F., Miracles of Jesus, Leiden: Brill (1965) 516; Marshall, Luke, 345.

outcome of her desire is uncertain and whether her action is based on presumption or not is unknown. However, after Jesus confirms that her action represents faith, Matthew indicates that she was instantly restored. Her faith is equated with the confidence that she has in him to help her. Robbins⁷⁰⁷ views the healing of Jesus as resulting from the power of his word which effects the healing. However, Matthew is not desiring to indicate that the woman was healed consequent to the word of Jesus but that it was a consequence of the woman's faith; his words simply affirmed her action as an act of faith. That which was needed on her part was confirmed by Jesus as having occurred. After the establishing of this most important element, the miracle of healing is pronounced. For Matthew, with his emphasis on faith, it is important that his readers recognise that the initially uncertainly motivated action of the woman receives the highest approval of Jesus in that it is deemed to be an act of faith. The appropriateness of her faith is affirmed by her restoration. Matthew again uses the phrase "take heart",⁷⁰⁸ for the restoration is assured and is immediate.⁷⁰⁹

Mark (153 words) and Luke (110 words) provide more details in their presentations. However, most importantly, they agree with Matthew in providing the words of Jesus to the woman, "your faith has made you well". Given that this represents the only verbal parallel phrase located in each of the

⁷⁰⁷ Robbins, V., "The woman who touched Jesus' garments: Socio-rhetorical analysis of the Synoptic accounts", 507; cf. Held, "Matthew...", 283, 286; Kalin, E.R., "Matthew 9:18-26: An Exercise in Redaction Criticism", CTM, 15 (1988) 39-47.

⁷⁰⁸ 9:2.

⁷⁰⁹ See the use of the perfect tense "iatai" (Mk. 5:29).

Synoptists, though other individual words and couplets are identical, it suggests that each was desirous to impress upon their readers this central feature.⁷¹⁰ Both Mark and Luke record the healing as occurring immediately after her touch, though, as with Matthew, this is later clarified as an expression of faith. While Mark records that she touched his garment, both Matthew and Luke state that she only touched the fringe, possibly to dispel any suggestion that she had grasped his clothes⁷¹¹ or presumptuously touched him; instead, they refer to her touching the lowest part that drifted through the dust. Such was her faith in the person of Jesus that she believed that touching the lowest part of the garment would bring about the cure. Such faith is proven to be well placed for it results in her healing.

It has been suggested that her action represents a deficient faith and borders on being a quasi-magical or superstitious act.⁷¹² Morris⁷¹³ suggests, "there seems to be an element of superstition mingled with the faith of the woman, but Jesus... responded to the faith that he discerned," Bruner⁷¹⁴ deducing that

⁷¹⁰ cf. Guelich, Mark, 1.299, Robbins, "The woman...", 504.

⁷¹¹ Gundry (Matthew, 173) similarly rejects any link with the reference in b. Ta'an 23b where the little children are recorded as tugging the hem of Hanin ha-Nehba's coat.

⁷¹² cf. Patte, Matthew, 132; Lane, Mark, 192; Harper, The Healings..., 102; Aune, D. E., "Magic in Early Christianity", (ed.) Hasse, W., Aufstieg und Niedergang der romischen Welt, Berlin: de Gruyter (1980) 550ff; Hooker (Mark, 148) qualifies this, writing, "it was common at the time to think of clothing as an extension of personality and the woman's desire to touch his clothes was natural".

⁷¹³ Morris, Matthew, 229; cf. France, Matthew, 171; Taylor, Mark, 290.

⁷¹⁴ Matthew, 343, though he admits, "to touch his clothes rather than... address his person may have been prompted by her sensitivity than her superstition"; Cranfield (Mark, 185) prefers to believe that it was to give Jesus the opportunity to correct the woman's faith and redirect it from a belief in the efficacy of his clothes to a belief in himself; cf. Nolland, Luke, 1.420; Marshall, Luke, 345;

Jesus sought to correct her action by stressing the faith element. However, each Synoptist simply records that it resulted from her faith. Thus, each, particularly Matthew, refers to the fact that it was her faith, not her touch,⁷¹⁵ nor a magically based perception that resulted in the healing.⁷¹⁶ Her action was prompted by the same quality of faith recorded of others who also came to Jesus with a need that they could not resolve, trusting that he would be able to deal with it.⁷¹⁷ Seeking healing from Jesus was proof of the necessary faith needed to receive it. Such a motivation draws from Jesus an affirmation of faith without any need to correct her action or require more evidence of her faith for it is already sufficient. Her faith is to be contrasted with the request of the Ruler in the previous narrative that Jesus lay his hands on his daughter, Cummings⁷¹⁸ stating that this is deliberate on the part of the authors in order to trace the ascent to a higher level of faith as reflected in the woman. Thus the suggestion of Schnackenburg,⁷¹⁹ who views the healing as taking place in the context of "unpurified faith", is based on a misunderstanding of the identity and quality of her faith.

however, if this is so, one wonders why the Synoptists do not include such a clarification.

⁷¹⁵ The use of touch does not inevitably suggest a magical or superstitious tendency on her part any more than does the use of touch by Jesus suggest a belief in magic by him.

⁷¹⁶ cf. Davies and Allison, Matthew, 2.130; Morris, Matthew, 230; Hutter, M., "Ein Altorientalischer Bittegegestus im Mt. 9, 20-22", ZNTW, 75 (1984) 133-135; Hagner, Matthew, 249; France, Matthew, 247; Guelich, Mark, 1.299; Lane, Mark, 193.

⁷¹⁷ cf. Hagner, Matthew, 249.

⁷¹⁸ Cummings, J., "The Tassel of his Cloak: Mark, Luke, Matthew-and Zechariah", SB, 2 (1978) 49.

⁷¹⁹ Jesus..., 28.

Jesus' questioning as to who had touched him rather than resulting from ignorance,⁷²⁰ provided the woman with the opportunity to confess her deed and healing. Most importantly, it provided an opportunity for Jesus to clarify the importance of faith especially for the benefit of those watching. Her fear, noted in Mark, may have been due to a recognition that she had ceremonially defiled him, according to the Law,⁷²¹ or that she had been presumptuous in touching him or that she was in awe because of the implications of his healing her.⁷²² Jesus provides peace as an antidote to her fear by identifying her action as motivated by faith.⁷²³

Jesus' attitude to the outcast

This narrative is sandwiched between the story of the raising of the Ruler's daughter in each of the Synoptics.⁷²⁴ Jesus' mission to "lay his hands on"

⁷²⁰ It may be significant to note that Mark, by the use of the feminine "ten" (v. 32) implies that Jesus was at least aware that the one who touched him was a woman; cf. May, E., "For power went forth from him...Lk. 6:19", CBQ, 14 (1952) 99.

⁷²¹ cf. Mann, C.S., Mark: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary, Garden City:Doubleday (1986) 286; Loader (W., "Challenged at the Boundaries: A Conservative Jesus in Mark's Tradition", JSNT, 63 (1966) 58) without evidence, suggests Jesus responded angrily because the woman had broken the Torah, despite which he healed her.

⁷²² Guelich (Mark, 1.298) prefers the latter; cf. Taylor, Mark, 292; Dwyer, The Motif..., 118.

⁷²³ cf. Mk. 5:36.

⁷²⁴ Emphases, including salvation (vs. 23, 28, 34) and faith (vs. 34, 36), are present in both; cf. Nineham, D.E., The Gospel of Mark, Baltimore:Penguin Books (1963) 112, 298ff; Kelber, W.H., The Kingdom in Mark, Philadelphia:Fortress (1974) 98ff; Derrett, J.D.M., "Mark's technique: The Haemorrhaging Woman and Jairus", Biblica, 63 (1982) 474-505; Scott (J.M., "Matthew 15.21-28: A Test Case for Jesus' Manners", JSNT, 63 (1996) 41) contrasts the greatness of the woman's faith with the little faith of the disciples, the latter mentioned twice; Dwyer (The Motif..., 116) notes both were unclean (by blood and death); each

Jairus' daughter is interrupted by the "touch" of the marginalised woman whom he calls "daughter". Jairus, a member of the Jewish ruling class who comes first to Jesus publicly and falls before him is associated with a segregated woman and one who is monetarily disadvantaged who surreptitiously approaches him second, bending to touch the hem of his garment, but receives ministry first. Jesus focuses on a marginalised woman in public and frees her from her disability, thus providing a message of hope to all who are burdened.⁷²⁵ Myers⁷²⁶ concludes, "Jesus accepts the priority of the ('highly inappropriate') importunity of the woman over the ('correct') request of the synagogue leader".

The fact that Jesus is not recorded as condemning the woman for her presence amongst a crowd may suggest his readiness to overlook the priority of the Law⁷²⁷ but more importantly, indicates his readiness to include the excluded. The crowd spatially fills the surrounding area but she is central to the story. Mark presents her, not the crowd, as experiencing fear, her role being to represent all marginalised folk who when interacting with the divine,

was helpless (v. 26) and; each are described as "daughter" (thugater) (vs. 23, 34f).

⁷²⁵ cf. Wahlberg, R.C., Jesus freed the woman, New York:Paulist Press (1978) 19ff; Mkole (J.C.L., "A Liberating Women's Profile in Mk. 5:25-34", ACS, 13.2 (1997) 36-47) views the passage as the basis for a paradigm for women's liberation in an African Christian context.

⁷²⁶ Binding..., 200f; he (202f) notes the record in Mark and Luke that the dying girl was 12 and the woman had been ill for 12 years, suggesting that this is to contrast the 12 years of privilege enjoyed by the ruler's daughter with the destitution of the woman for a similar period.

⁷²⁷ cf. Selvidge, M.J., "Mark 5:25-34 and Leviticus 15:19-20: A Reaction to Restrictive Purity Regulations", JBL, 103 (1984) 619-623.

offer their faith as proof of their recognition of the superior Saviour whilst receiving acceptance from him.

A soteriological nuance is particularly located in Mark and Luke insofar as they both record Jesus encouraging the woman to, "go in peace," referring to her as "daughter", also recording her willing transparency before Jesus in that having fallen fearfully before him, she publicly witnesses concerning that which has been achieved. The restoration she experiences involves more than physical healing; it also includes well being on other levels including social reinvolverment, religious inclusion and emotional satisfaction.⁷²⁸ Thus, Sanford proposes that the significance of the narrative is that the illness was a necessary part of her journey to Jesus, for without it, she would never have searched for him.⁷²⁹ Luke, in particular, as elsewhere, uses different words to describe the healing process.⁷³⁰ Thus, in describing her attempt to be healed (v. 43), he uses *θεραπεύω* but when he records the words of Jesus, he, with Matthew and Mark, uses *σωζω*. It is indicative of another level of restoration that has taken place, that of spiritual restoration as well as physical healing for the physically and spiritually marginalised.⁷³¹

⁷²⁸ cf. Reid, B., "Healing beyond the Physical, *BibT*, (July 1994) 241; Hooker, *Mark*, 149; Green, *Luke*, 349.

⁷²⁹ *Healing...*, 35.

⁷³⁰ cf. 17:13-19.

⁷³¹ cf. Marshall, *Luke*, 346; Turner, M., "The Spirit and the Power of Jesus' Miracles in the Lucan Conception", *NovT*, 33.2 (1991) 138; Schweizer, E., *The Good News according to Mark*, London: SPCK (1970) 118; Guelich (*Mark*, 1.299) simply describes the phrase as expressing a common Semitic farewell as does Robbins ("The woman...", 510); however, it is significant to note that the other references to "peace" in Luke have possible soteriological contexts (1:79; 2:14, 29(30); 7:50; 8:48; 10:5f); Hagner (*Matthew*, 1.249) feels the threefold use of the term "*σωζω*" in Matthew is to indicate that a deeper salvation is here being

Conclusion

Although ancillary elements are present in the narratives concerned, the central aspect relates to the importance of faith as a catalyst for healing. Other actions on the part of the woman are clarified as having significance only in that they are the results of her faith in the ability of Jesus to meet her need; indeed, such is her belief that a mere touch is deemed to be sufficient to achieve the miracle. The faith on her part coalesces with the desire on his part to overlook the purity laws in order to restore and incorporate the outcast.

offered as well as physical healing, especially as the term is used elsewhere in Matthew with that meaning (1:21; 10:22; 16:25; 18:11; 19:25); however, it is to be noted that “σωζω” is used in 8:25; 14:30; 27:40, 42, 49 with non-soteriological meanings; Gundry (Matthew, 174) believes the woman is already a believer because of the perfect tense of “σωζω” that is used... “you have been saved”, though this is not necessary.

Jesus heals a crippled woman

(Lk. 13:10-17)

Motifs: **The authority of Jesus over the Sabbath...**
...as the initiator of the Kingdom

The catalyst for decision

Introduction

The woman involved is described as "having a spirit of infirmity", resulting in a curvature of the spine.⁷³² The identity of "pneuma" is uncertain. It could refer to the woman being possessed by a demon.⁷³³ Alternatively, it may indicate that the illness results from a perceived evil influence.⁷³⁴ Insofar as the presentation of the miracle is in terms of its being a healing from a physical disability,⁷³⁵ it is preferable to view it as an incident in which a malign influence has impacted this woman. Jesus breaks the bond, the term (δεσμος) being used

⁷³² cf. Marshall, Luke, 557; Van der Loos, The Miracles..., 520f; Wilkinson (J., "The Case of the Bent Woman", EQ, 49 (1977)) after analysing the evidence, suggests spondylitis ankylopoietica.

⁷³³ cf. Twelftree, G., Christ Triumphant, London:HS (1985) 100; Squires, J.T., The Plan of God in Luke-Acts, Cambridge:CUP (1993) 92f; Seim, T.K., The Double Message: Patterns of Gender in Luke-Acts, Edinburgh:T. & T. Clark, (1994) 41.

⁷³⁴ cf. Marshall, Luke, 557.

⁷³⁵ cf. Nolland, Luke, 2.723f; Wilkinson, "The Case of the Bent...", 201ff.

in Mark 7:35 to describe the miraculous restoration of the power of speech by Jesus in a non-exorcistic miracle.⁷³⁶ In this regard, Satan would be understood to be its ultimate cause, and the restoration of the woman would be interpreted in the context of the Lucan determination to demonstrate the supremacy and ultimate victory of Jesus over Satan.

Luke records this miracle after the parable of the barren fig tree, the miracle occurring in a synagogue on the Sabbath. The main purposes of the narrative are to indicate the authority of Jesus to initiate the Kingdom, in particular demonstrated by healing, on the Sabbath;⁷³⁷ to identify the different reactions of the woman concerned and the religious opposition and; to reveal that when a healing is achieved by Jesus, God is glorified.

The authority of Jesus

The ruler of the synagogue does not appear to be surprised that Jesus healed the woman, despite her being in this condition for eighteen years.⁷³⁸ That which surprises him, leading to his indignation, is that Jesus should have performed it on the Sabbath. In dealing with this complaint, Jesus accuses his

⁷³⁶ cf. Hamm, M.D., "The Freeing of the Bent Woman and the Restoration of Israel: Lk. 13:10-17 as Narrative Theology", *JSNT*, 31 (1987) 32f.

⁷³⁷ This aspect is mentioned in each of the Gospels (Matt. 12:10; Mk. 1:21ff; 3:4; Lk. 6:6-11; 14:1-6; Jn. 5:1-18; 7:23; 9:14).

⁷³⁸ This numeral may have symbolic undertones; it is mentioned in 13:4. In the OT, it is often used in contexts of subjugation and oppression of the Israelites (Jud. 3:13f; 10:8; 20:25) and of others (Jud. 20:44; 2 Sam. 8:13; 1 Chron. 18:12); Marshall (*Luke*, 557) suggest the numbers are coincidental.

opponents of hypocrisy while Luke comments that the people rejoiced at all the glorious things that were done by him.

It is significant to note that the motif of faith is absent, neither is there any request for healing or belief in healing on the part of those present. Likewise, Luke does not record that Jesus healed out of compassion, though Green⁷³⁹ presents Jesus' action as "an expression of God's mercy". Instead, in order to stress the ascendancy of Jesus, Luke records Jesus initiating the healing, the perfect tense indicating a permanent healing, and, on placing his hands upon her, effecting an immediate healing. On other infrequent occasions when Jesus initiates a healing, without a prior request, it is, as here, to introduce a Sabbath controversy that will lead to the possibility of faith or rejection.⁷⁴⁰ This healing is part of a wider agenda for the Master of all situations that best illustrates the establishment of the new kingdom, announced earlier (4:18) as the divine will. This is affirmed by Luke's entitlement of Jesus as "Lord" (v. 15), as well as in his recording his authority over the Sabbath and the Law. His authority is affirmed through his description of the woman being released from a "spirit of infirmity". Not only has she been in this condition for eighteen years; it is also malevolent in origin.

⁷³⁹ Green, J.B., "Jesus and a daughter of Abraham (Luke 13:10-17): Test Case for a Lucan perspective on Jesus' miracles", CBQ, 51 (1989) 651.

⁷⁴⁰ Matt. 12:9-14//s; Jn. 5:2-8; 9:1-12.

The catalyst for decision

Her response is to express praise to God while the ruler of the synagogue expresses complaint to the people. While she acknowledges that God has worked through Jesus, the synagogue ruler competes with Jesus, challenging his authority before the crowd. The healing is a potential catalyst for faith and as such, forms a major purpose in the Lukan narrative especially when the significance of the context in which he places it is appreciated. Prior to this event, Luke has recorded Jesus teaching the Jews concerning their need to repent; otherwise, judgement will occur, leading to the possibility of destruction; whereupon he concludes with the parable of the fig tree (13:6-9). Although the vine grower looks for fruit, it is absent and destruction is the destiny of the fig tree. The clarity and force of this uncomfortable message to self - satisfied Jews is apparent. If fruit is lacking in the lives of those who are listening to him, they will suffer a similar lot.⁷⁴¹ However, another tree is described after the healing of the woman is recorded, but this one is flourishing, the parable being introduced by the word "therefore" so as to establish a link with the previous healing. Luke records Jesus describing the Kingdom of God as being like a tiny mustard seed, which grows into a tree in which all the birds make their nests (13:18f).⁷⁴² The former tree is to be identified with the ruler and his colleagues, while the flourishing tree

⁷⁴¹ Goulder (M.D., Luke, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press (1994) 564) views this motif of judgement commencing in 12:41-53 as a reference to the Church, followed by 12:54-13:9 which relates to the uncommitted, 13:10-21 referring to the Jews.

⁷⁴² cf. Ps. 104:12; Ezek. 17:22ff; Dan. 4:10ff.

symbolises the transformed woman, who benefits from the Kingdom established by Jesus.

The certain development of the Kingdom is confirmed, although from small and inauspicious beginnings, the result being that many people will benefit from it. The growth of the Kingdom is sure, the healing of the woman being a symbol of that small beginning resulting in a remarkable transformation.⁷⁴³ As a physically dysfunctional woman, she was rendered small and insignificant. Yet the miracle that occurred in her life was a catalyst for radical restructuring. Not only did all the people rejoice but the adversaries of Jesus were put to shame. Meanwhile, he was able to re-establish the true purposes of the Sabbath and to confirm his role as the one who had come to set at liberty those who were oppressed (4:19).⁷⁴⁴ She functions as a model for those who receive Jesus as the bringer of the Kingdom and benefit from its transforming presence.⁷⁴⁵ She has been released from her weakness; physical and religious straitjackets that have produced a stultifying effect on her life. Now, she experiences freedom.

Although the healing is sensational, this is not the focus of the pericope; the focus is on the attitude of those present (13:14-17).⁷⁴⁶ The religious leader and his colleagues are embarrassingly blind to their unloving reliance on dogma.

⁷⁴³ This motif is continued in the parable of the leaven that follows (vs 20f).

⁷⁴⁴ cf. Marshall, *Luke*, 556; Derrett ("Positive...", 276f) anticipates links with Ps. 69:23 and Lev. 26:13.

⁷⁴⁵ cf. O'Toole, R.F., "Some Exegetical Reflections on Luke 13:10-17", *Biblica*, 73 (1992) 89, 96, 99.

⁷⁴⁶ O'Toole (ibid. 85ff) suggests that the fact that the final 4 verses are longer than the previous 4, indicates that "Luke wants his readers to give more attention to vv. 14-17 than vv. 10-13".

Instead of rejoicing that one who has been bound by Satan has been released, and that on the most appropriate day of the Sabbath, they are outraged because Jesus has broken the rules that they perceive determine correct behaviour on the Sabbath. Whilst recognising his capacity to heal, for they recommend the people return on the following days to be healed (v. 14), they fail to deduce a connection between his healing authority and his authority to heal on the Sabbath. They do not condemn his healings as the work of the Devil and thus it is to be assumed they reckon them to be divine. Since they are the latter, it is to be concluded that God has permitted the healing to occur on the Sabbath, though it appears that they overlooked this logical conclusion. The healing itself is proof that another voice has spoken besides that of Jesus, sanctioning his reinterpretation of their restrictive practices. But their estimation of Jesus has not been improved by the healing and it is inferior to the response of the woman who praises God and thus acknowledges her healing to be from God. In looking into the eyes of the now erect woman, they only see their law being broken, not the redeeming work of God.

The proof that a true recognition of Jesus has taken place will be the presence of fruit in one's life, resulting in transformation, as envisaged in the following parables of the mustard seed and the leaven. This principle is potentially activated in the healing of the woman and exhibited in the rejoicing of the people present who are "all" positively affected by "all" his glorious deeds (v. 17). At the same time, "all" his adversaries are shamed (v. 17); while she stands straight, they stoop in shame.

The parable of the narrow door that follows (vs. 22ff) is crucial to the passage as a whole in that it establishes the importance of prompt action based on an accurate understanding of the salvation offered by Jesus, failure to do so resulting in the rejecters being forsaken (v. 35). The tragedy is that the message had been presented to them but they had failed to perceive it (vs. 26ff).

Luke presents Jesus questioning the synagogue ruler's interpretation of the Law concerning the Sabbath.⁷⁴⁷ Whereas the latter presumes that setting someone free⁷⁴⁸ is an illegitimate action on the Sabbath, Jesus establishes that this is sanctioned on the Sabbath. The use of the same word "δεῖ" (it is necessary) by the ruler (v. 14) and by Jesus (v. 16) appears to be more than coincidental and parallels the appropriateness of work on the six days and healing on the Sabbath. As it is deemed by the ruler necessary to work on six days, so also Jesus affirms it is necessary to heal the woman on the Sabbath.⁷⁴⁹ Similarly, as it is appropriate for work to be undertaken on six days, according to the ruler, Jesus calls into question the appropriateness of Satan being allowed to work on the Sabbath in binding the woman.

⁷⁴⁷ M. Shab. 7.2, 10:1-5; b. Abod. Zar. 28b records the view that one should not anoint an eye on the Sabbath; j. Shab. 14d, 17f states that the spittle of a fasting man should not be applied to the eyes on the Sabbath; cf. Strack, H.L., Billerbeck, P., Kommentar zum Neuen Testament und Midrasch, Munich:Beck (1956) 1.623-629.

⁷⁴⁸ See the use of "λυω" and its cognates in vs. 12, 15f.

⁷⁴⁹ cf. Green, "Jesus...", 646.

Simultaneously, he establishes the felicitous quality of his action of releasing her. That it is acceptable to provide water for an animal presumes that it is much more acceptable to release a woman from the barrenness of a condition that denies her the refreshment of social interaction and physical freedom. That "a daughter of Abraham" should be refused the opportunity to be released from the malevolent activity of Satan is unacceptable, especially given that it is on the Sabbath and in the synagogue; not only is she a woman and thereby superior to an ox or ass, but she is also "a daughter of Abraham". The latter phrase has no parallel in the New Testament.⁷⁵⁰ The significance of this term does not reside in its defining her racial identity,⁷⁵¹ but in affirming her as a person who stands in the line of salvific promises from God (1:72-75). Such a child of Abraham is understood by Luke as being eligible to receive the saving mercy of God (13:28f, 19:9f).⁷⁵² The link with Abraham is the central feature, the one to whom the promises were given of an immeasurable family (Heb. 11:11f, 17ff).⁷⁵³

Both the synagogue as a venue but, more importantly, the Sabbath as a time location are viewed as demanding such action by Jesus. The Sabbath is the ideal day on which to relieve a burden because, according to Deuteronomy

⁷⁵⁰ cf. 4 Macc. 14:20; 15:28; 17:6; 18:20.

⁷⁵¹ cf. Wilkinson, W., The Good News in Luke, Glasgow:Collins (1974) 196; Fitzmyer, J.A., The Gospel according to Luke 10-24, New York:Doubleday (1985) 1013; Evans, C.F., Saint Luke, London:SCM (1990) 551; Nolland, J., Luke 9:21-18:34, Dallas:Word (1993) 724; Harper (Healings..., 50) views it, speculatively, as showing "Jesus' Jewish pride".

⁷⁵² cf. O'Toole, "Some Exegetical...", 98; Hamm, "The Freeing...", 34.

⁷⁵³ Thomas (The Devil..., 227) notes other references to Abraham in Luke which relate to individuals in special need of God's mercy (1:54f; 3:7-9; 16:22-32; 19:8f).

5:15, God commanded the Jewish nation to keep the Sabbath as a memorial of the removal of their bondage by God. As Jesus legitimately prophesies his activity of "proclaiming release to the captives" (4:18) in the synagogue on the Sabbath, so it must be legitimate for him to be thus involved.⁷⁵⁴ Yet, the ruler, and by implication, the Jewish religious establishment, by enforcing their laws, would make Jesus, and by implication, God, impotent.

Thus, the shame that is the experience of the opposition is not to be understood only in the context of their hypocrisy but also in their lack of knowledge of the true purposes of the Sabbath. The preceding parable of the fig tree has an important antecedent in 6:43-45 which concludes with the statement that the fruit of a person's life may be demonstrated by that which comes out of the mouth. The ruler has demonstrated his paucity of spirituality by his words.

Even Jerusalem fails to recognise her Lord, Jesus prophesying that this will continue until the people bless the one who comes in the name of the Lord (vs. 22-30). The fact that this is the last recorded visit of Jesus to a synagogue implies that the synagogue is no longer willing to countenance the presence of Jesus.⁷⁵⁵ The healing of the woman is proof that she has recognised the

⁷⁵⁴ Derrett ("Positive...", 277) views the activity of Satan as illegal, based on Jer. 17:21f.

⁷⁵⁵ Green ("Jesus...", 649f) comments on the negative aspects of the synagogue to the person and mission of Jesus, as viewed by Luke (4:16-30; 6:6-11; 12:11; 21:12; Acts 13:14-52; 17:1-9, 10-15; 18:4-7; 19:8-10); however, it is difficult to be certain of this, given other texts that present them as useful bases for the ministry of Jesus (4:15f, 31ff, 42; 6:6ff; 7:5; 8:41). However, in 13:26, Jesus is presented teaching in the streets while the next Sabbath controversy, though

significance of Jesus, leading to her praising God. The one who is recorded as coming to “proclaim release to the captives” (4:18) has authoritatively released a captive woman from her bondage whilst confirming his messianic claims.

Conclusion

The significance of the narrative is that it demonstrates the authority of Jesus who evidences his healing capability but also chooses to heal on the Sabbath. This provides him with an opportunity to relocate the Sabbath as the appropriate day in which to bring life and freedom and to remove it from the stultifying effects of legalism.⁷⁵⁶ The authoritative stance he takes is such that it calls for a decision to follow or reject him. The catalyst has again been created; the response is yet to be determined. The religious leader assumes Jesus has made a mistake; the woman recognises him as the Master.

bearing similarities to the present one, is not referred to as taking place in the synagogue (14:1-6).

⁷⁵⁶ Brown (*Israel's...*, 221f) records, “for Jesus, the Sabbath was the ideal day for removing the terrible burden of sickness and demonic oppression, thereby providing true rest for the formerly enslaved” and “bringing to full expression the divine purpose for the day”; thus, Brown (R., “The Gospel Miracles”, *The Bible in Current Catholic Thought*, (ed.) McKenzie, J.L., New York:Herder and Herder (1962) 188) understands Jesus’ healing on the Sabbath as a sign of God’s “renewed creativity” while Saucy (M., “Miracles and Jesus’ Proclamation of the Kingdom of God”, *BS*, 153 (July-Sept. 1996) 288; cf. Davey (F.N., “Healing in the New Testament”, *The Miracles and the Resurrection*, London:SPCK (1964) 54) views it as “an image associated with the eternal rest of the future age”.

Jesus heals at the Sheep Pool

(John 5:2-47)

Motifs: **The identity of Jesus**

The catalyst for decision

Introduction

The healing, which takes up only the first eleven verses, functions as the introduction to a discussion relating to the person of Jesus. The purpose of the healing account must therefore be understood in the context of the whole passage.

Although research concerning the identity of the Feast has been undertaken,⁷⁵⁷ such an issue is best left undetermined for it is of little significance to the story and may undermine its focus. Elsewhere, the author has identified particular Feasts⁷⁵⁸; here, the simple mention of a Feast indicates that crowds would have been present. This focuses attention on the fact that despite this, Jesus chooses only to heal one person.

⁷⁵⁷ Pentecost (Ellis, P., The Genius of John, Collegeville:Liturgical Press (1984) 88); Passover (Nicol, W., The Semeia in the Fourth Gospel, Leiden:Brill (1972) 32); New Year (Guilding, A., The Fourth Gospel and Jewish Worship, Oxford:Clarendon (1960) 69-91).

⁷⁵⁸ 7:2; 10:22; 11:55; 13:1; 19:14, 31.

Similarly, the presence of the water provides an expectation in the minds of the readers, given the positive nuances relating to it earlier in the gospel.⁷⁵⁹

However, this expectation will be focused on only one person. The previous passage, described as the second of Jesus' signs (4:54), resulted in multiple healings and faith expressed in Christ by a number of people. The stage is set for a similar event, but this time, only one person is healed. The concentration on the man is thus accentuated; the huge crowds fade into the background; the man is the centre of attention. The potential for faith on the part of so many onlookers is clear, but unlike the onlookers in the previous story who express faith, Jesus is persecuted (5:16) and his life is threatened (5:18). Only one person accurately identifies Jesus; the others miss the signposts.

The identity of Jesus

Jesus takes the initiative and heals a man who has been ill for thirty eight years. On most occasions, Jesus responded to requests for healing. This healing appears to be random,⁷⁶⁰ involving the use of a command that the paralytic take up his bed and walk,⁷⁶¹ as a result of which, he is immediately

⁷⁵⁹ 1:25ff...John's baptism; 2:1-11...the miracle of water into wine; 3:5...birth of water and the Spirit; 3:23; 4:2...water baptism; 4:9-15...living water.

⁷⁶⁰ Dickinson (*God...*, 104) suggests he was chosen because he had been there the longest though the text does not confirm this; Richards (*The Question...*, 61) suggests Jesus ministered to the one person unable to get to the pool; cf. Mitchell, J. G., "Does God heal today", *BS*, 122 (Jan., 1965) 48; evidence for this speculation is lacking.

⁷⁶¹ Barrett (C.K., *The Gospel according to St. John*, London:SPCK (1978) 254) suggests this was to prove the cure was publicly validated; cf. Haenchen, E., *John 1*, Philadelphia:Fortress Press (1984) 246; Carson, D.A., *The Gospel according to John*, Leicester:IVP (1991) 244.

healed.⁷⁶² Although the apparently arbitrary nature of the choice of the man by Jesus has received comment, it probably represents the fact that the healing is significant to the wider context in terms of what it represents. The healing transformed his life but the teaching of Jesus allied to the healing had the potential of transforming many others.

It is recorded (v. 6) that Jesus knew the length of his illness.⁷⁶³ It may be deduced that this formed a significant reason for his choice of this man to receive his healing. Although it may have symbolic undertones,⁷⁶⁴ the length of time of the man's incapacity stresses the miraculous nature of the healing. The illness is undefined; it is more important to recognise that it has held this man in its grip for so long. Such a restoration would be clearly miraculous and the option to believe more appropriate, rejection seen to be more deliberate.

Another Sabbath controversy is to be introduced with its potential for rejection or acceptance. Prior to the healing, the man is asked by Jesus if he wants to be healed.⁷⁶⁵ To such a question, the man responds that he cannot get to the

⁷⁶² See (vs. 8f) the use of the aorist tense to indicate instantaneous healing... "ἄρουν" (1st aorist indicative); "ἦρουν" (1st aorist indicative); also the use of the present imperative "περιπατεῖτε" and imperfect "περιπατέτε" to indicate the continuous nature of his ability to walk.

⁷⁶³ Whether this is natural knowledge (Bernard, J. H., The Gospel according to St. John, Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark (1928) 1.230; Lindars, B., The Gospel of John, London: Oliphants (1972) 215) or supernaturally gained (Witkamp, L. T., "The use of Traditions in John 5:1-18", JSNT, 25 (1985) 22; Barrett, John, 254) is of less importance than its possible bearing on the choice of the one restored.

⁷⁶⁴ Israel in the wilderness (Ellis, John, 88); equivalent to a generation (Grayston, K., The Gospel of John, London: Epworth (1990) 48).

⁷⁶⁵ Carson, (John, 243) offering 4:10, 6:32f as examples, describes this as one of "the elliptical offers" often made by Jesus; Thomas (J.C., "Stop sinning lest something

water quickly enough to benefit from its therapeutic powers. Although it may be deduced that Jesus is ascertaining the desire of the man to be healed⁷⁶⁶ or even rebuking him for an apparent lack of desire,⁷⁶⁷ these options appear to be absurd, the reason for his presence there being proof of his desire to be healed.

Whatever the purpose of Jesus' question, it does not inspire faith for the man is not recorded as anticipating any restoration by Jesus. He is oblivious to the fact that the answer to his problem stands before him, his eyes being focused only on the alleged therapy of the pool. However, although his misunderstanding is clear,⁷⁶⁸ it is not the major aspect of the writer's attention.

worse come upon you': The man at the pool in John 5", *JSNT*, 59 (1995) 10) comments on the use of "ὑγιής" which, to him, indicates the idea that Jesus asks the man if he desires to be made whole, rather than to be healed. However, given that the man is unaware of the identity of Jesus and therefore ignorant of any potential within Jesus to grant him spiritual wholeness and insofar as his physical healing is discussed in verses 9, 10, 13, the suggestion is unlikely.

⁷⁶⁶ Thus, Wimber, *Power Evangelism*, 85f; cf. Harper, *The Healings...*, 55, 95; Morton, J.G., "Christ's diagnosis of disease at Bethesda", *ET*, 33 (1921-1922) 425; Tenney, M.C., "Topics from the Gospel of John-Part 2: The meaning of the Signs", *BS*, 132 (April 1975) 148; Beasley-Murray, G.R., *John*, Waco: Word (1991) 74; Carlson, P.K., "A Healing Ministry in the Church Today", unpubl. D.Min., Fuller Theological Seminary (1992) 117; Stibbe, M., *John*, Sheffield: JSOT Press (1993) 75; Milne, B., *The Message of John*, Leicester: IVP (1993) 95; Comfort (P.W., Hawley, W.C., *Opening the Gospel of John*, Wheaton: Tyndale (1994) 91) suggests that Jesus is seeking the permission of the man; Maddocks (*The Christian...*, 49) writes, "He had got so used to his illness that it was part of him. Here was not just a man with a sickness but a sick man".

⁷⁶⁷ cf. Fitch, W.O., "The Interpretation of St. John 5:6", *SE*, 4 (1968) 195; Brown (R.E. *The Gospel according to John*, London: Geoffrey Chapman (1971) 1.209); Witkamp ("The use...", 24f) suggests the man's response was a misunderstanding; Beasley-Murray (*John*, 74) thinks it was a complaint, Morton ("Christ's...", 425) suggesting that it was due to the apathy expressed and possible dishonour felt by the man concerning his disease.

⁷⁶⁸ cf. Witkamp, "The use...", 24f; van Tilborg, S., *Imaginative Love in John*, Leiden: Brill (1993) 216.

It is more likely that the author is establishing, for the benefit of the readers, that the man has no perception that he is in the presence of one who has the power to heal him, there being no request that Jesus heal him, only a forlorn comment on the impossibility of his situation. However, the same readers are privy to the knowledge of Jesus' power; the tension thus develops.⁷⁶⁹ The man expresses no faith, neither is it requested of him by Jesus; quite explicitly, John records that the man did not know the identity of his healer. Nevertheless, Jesus still heals him. John records the healing as occurring before the man picked up his bed and walked, simply as a result of the word of Jesus. It happened because Jesus commanded that it would, the man being the passive recipient. In each of the four restorations in John, the healing is accompanied by a command.⁷⁷⁰ Jesus is viewed as bearing authority to heal without any prompting on the part of the person who is sick. Compassion is not the reason for healings in John. Expressions of faith do not control Jesus;⁷⁷¹ indeed, the concept of faith is only mentioned once in John prior to a healing occurrence.⁷⁷² In John, Jesus functions sovereignly, the healing operating as a sign of that fact. Jesus maintains centre stage in the narrative in which even the healing is of secondary importance.⁷⁷³

⁷⁶⁹ see further Staley, J.F., "Stumbling in the Dark, Reaching for the Light: Reading Characters in John 5 and 9", *Semeia*, 53 (1991) 59.

⁷⁷⁰ 4:50; 5:8; 9:7; 11:39.

⁷⁷¹ contra Kee (*Medicine...*, 89) who believes the text indicates that his healing has resulted from his responding "in faith to the word of Jesus".

⁷⁷² 4:48.

⁷⁷³ cf. Haenchen, *John*, 246; Stibbe, *John*, 76; Brown (*John*, 1. 216) describes the section that follows as "one of the most exalted in John".

It is only after the healing is recorded, that the author informs the reader that it occurred on the Sabbath. His actions, and those of the healed man (v. 10), broke Sabbath legislation (v. 18), causing the outrage of the Jews, for the first time being identified as hostile to Jesus (v. 18). Even his cleansing of the Temple (2:13-22) is not described as resulting in the ire of the Jews. In the previous pericope, the Galileans welcomed Jesus (4:45). Now, in Jerusalem, the Jews reject him for healing on the Sabbath. Without waiting for one day until the Sabbath has ended, Jesus heals the man who has already waited thirty eight years! His authority over the Sabbath has been established.⁷⁷⁴ The one who breaks the Law (v. 10), as a result of his healing power, demonstrates that he has the authority so to do (v. 11).

However, it is the claimed combination of the work of the Father and Jesus (v. 17), and thereby his implicit claims to deity, that is the fundamental cause of Jewish anger towards Jesus, moreso even than his healing the man on the Sabbath. Jesus' response demonstrates his readiness to go beyond a desire to prove his authority over the Sabbath; that is displaced by a more fundamental Christological claim. He states that he only does what he sees the Father doing (vs. 19f) which subsequently leads to a discourse relating to the relationship between Jesus and the Father ("my Father"). It is not just that he has authority to heal and that on the Sabbath but he implicates the Father in this Sabbath healing. By claiming to follow the Father's guidance, he

⁷⁷⁴ cf. Witherington, John's..., 134; Beasley-Murray, John, 80; Thomas, "Stop...", 13.

indicates that the Father is in sympathy with this healing activity.⁷⁷⁵ A unique relationship with the Father is being claimed by Jesus; this is certainly how the Jews perceived it (v. 18). Jesus is viewed by the Jews as making himself equal to God which is, to them, "insane blasphemy".⁷⁷⁶ However, Jesus is not expressing independence from God but dependence on God though the Jews could "only conceive equality with God as independence from God".⁷⁷⁷ Jesus uses the miracle as an affirmation of his status by pointing to the presence of the divine power manifest within it⁷⁷⁸ whilst offering the observers the opportunity to express belief or unbelief.⁷⁷⁹ The healing is the catalyst for the discussion that follows, creating the possibility for an expression of faith in him, not as healer, but as the Son of God.⁷⁸⁰

The relationship with the Father is explicated by Jesus in the ensuing verses (vs. 19-30) and includes statements concerning the dependency of the Son on the Father in which the activity of the Father and the Son are seen to take place at the same time, such is their unity (vs. 19, 30),⁷⁸¹ the ability of Jesus to know what the Father is doing and his authority to do likewise (v. 19), the love

⁷⁷⁵ cf. Bultmann, R. The Gospel of John, Philadelphia: Westminster Press (1971) 246f; Schnackenburg, R., The Gospel according to St. John, London: Burns and Oates (1980) 2. 101; Lindars, John, 217.

⁷⁷⁶ cf. Bultmann, John, 244.

⁷⁷⁷ *ibid*, 244.

⁷⁷⁸ cf. Comfort, Opening..., 87; Wilkinson (J. "A Study of Healing in the Gospel according to John", SJT, 20 (1967) 451-461) develops this to include all the healings recorded by John which he deduces are to demonstrate the glory of God as reflected in Jesus.

⁷⁷⁹ cf. Sanders, J.N., Mastin, B.A., The Gospel according to St. John, London: A. & C. Black (1968) 174.

⁷⁸⁰ It may be of significance to note that "ἐγείρω" is used in the healing (v. 8) and the restoration in the last day (vs. 28f).

⁷⁸¹ cf. Schnackenburg, John, 2. 103.

of the Father for the Son (v. 20), the willingness of the Father to reveal all he is doing to the Son (v. 20) and the ability of the Son to raise the dead and to give life,⁷⁸² a prerogative normally belonging to God (v. 21).⁷⁸³ It also establishes that the divine role of judge has been entrusted to the Son by the Father (v. 22)⁷⁸⁴ while the same quality of honour is shared by the Son and the Father (v. 23). The Son is also described as having the authority to give eternal life (v. 24ff), that life being received if his words are believed. It is the response of the individual to the Son that determines the judgement to come. As his works (vs. 20, 36) witness to his person, so also do John the Baptist (v. 32f), the Father (v. 37), the Scriptures (v. 39), Moses (v. 46) and so also, this healing. The healing for the author is thus to be viewed as a stimulus to faith on the part of those who have witnessed it. The discussion that follows indicates that not only does Jesus accomplish physical works (v. 36), but he also functions in the eternal dimension executing judgement (vs. 21, 27), granting salvation (v. 34) and eternal life (vs. 21, 24, 39), claiming to operate with the authority of God (vs. 19f, 27, 30, 37, 43). The healing is thus only the preliminary stage of the pericope.

John later records the healed man responding to the Jews and witnessing on behalf of Jesus even though he still has no recognition of the identity of Jesus. It is at this point that the author reveals that signs can have the effect of engendering faith in themselves and are valid forms of witness to the truth.

⁷⁸² Carson (John, 253) sees allusions to eschatological and spiritual life.

⁷⁸³ 2 Kings 5:7.

⁷⁸⁴ Gen. 18:25.

After establishing the validity of signs as evidence for the truth, John records that Jesus located the man and affirmed him as being well.⁷⁸⁵ The fact that Jesus was able to locate the man, and that during a crowded Feast, suggests the probability of supernatural knowledge⁷⁸⁶ but more likely acts as a comment on the importance of the ensuing discussion between the man and Jesus. This included more than confirmation that he had been healed, that being obvious to all, especially the man. It indicated that the healing was permanent⁷⁸⁷ but, more importantly, discloses a soteriological dimension, Kee⁷⁸⁸ noting that it "provides the opportunity for a disclosure of the ultimate redemptive purpose of God". The wholeness achieved signifies more than physical healing. The man, having identified Jesus, tells others about him and, in particular, that Jesus has made him whole. This is not a betrayal of Jesus to his enemies but a testimony to his person. Thomas⁷⁸⁹ notes, "in every other occurrence in Johannine literature, this term (ὑγιής) is used in an extraordinarily positive fashion: to describe the activity of the Messiah (4:25), the Paraclete (16:13, 14, 15), and the authoritative proclamation of the Johannine Church (1 Jn. 1:5)". The restored man stands as an object lesson to the Jews. In contrast to them, he follows Jesus as a disciple, testifying to his authority.

⁷⁸⁵ The term "ὑγιής" is used in verses 6, 9, 11, 14, 15 though only once elsewhere in John (7:23) and 5 times in the rest of the NT.

⁷⁸⁶ cf. Thomas, "Stop...", 14.

⁷⁸⁷ The use of the perfect tense may indicate this.

⁷⁸⁸ Medicine..., 89; cf. Thomas, The Devil..., 105.

⁷⁸⁹ The Devil..., 108.

The catalyst for decision

The other important element in the final words of Jesus to the man is the exhortation that he sin no more so that nothing worse should happen to him. Although Jesus is not necessarily advocating the belief that all sickness is caused by sin, it is possible that on this occasion, the illness of the man was caused by sin, the admonition not to sin taking on a personal warning.⁷⁹⁰

However, as has been indicated, though Jesus was aware of the link between sin and sickness in the minds of his contemporaries, the Gospels do not record him ever explicitly linking them, while the only occasion that John records his awareness of such a belief also indicates Jesus' rejection of it (9:3). It is thus uncertain whether Jesus is here identifying a relationship between a specific sin and consequent sickness.⁷⁹¹ The lack of clarity to this end, the absence of the motifs of forgiveness and repentance and the fact that sin is only mentioned to the man at a later stage when the potential link would be lost on the attendant witnesses of the healing all strongly suggest that this was not a motivation in the healing of the man.

The clarification of the worse fate is not provided, though given the extent of the man's suffering for the previous thirty eight years, it is probable that Jesus

⁷⁹⁰ cf. Thomas, "Stop...", 17; Carson, John, 246; Kydd, R.A.N., Healing through the Centuries, Peabody: Hendrickson (1998) 6.

⁷⁹¹ cf. Barrett, John, 255; Kysar, R., John, Minneapolis: Augsburg (1986) 78; Wink ("Mark 2:1-12", Interpretation, 36 (1982) 60) notes that the man was still on his pallet after the declaration of forgiveness, implying that there was no link between any personal sin and the sickness.

has in mind eternal consequences⁷⁹² of a life of sin. The previous reference to sin (1:29) is offered in the context of the record of the purpose of Jesus as being to “take away the sin of the world”. Insofar as Jesus is described as coming to remove sin and now he is described as removing illness, the link is implied. However, it is preferable to see the sickness as a symptom of the wider impact that sin has had on the world that includes, though is not restricted to, illness.

Jesus is concerned that the future destiny of the man should not be prejudiced by sin, the present imperative form indicating a life of sin.⁷⁹³ It is the life that seeks after God that is at issue here and the man is advised by Jesus that such a lifestyle should be his intended aim. Otherwise, even the trauma and frustration of thirty eight years invalidity will be reckoned to be inferior to a worse fate that would befall him. Jesus provides him with a fresh start and forgives him his previous sins.⁷⁹⁴ To fail to take advantage of that forgiveness will inevitably lead to a dire fate. John's pattern of stressing the valid place of miracles in the path to faith is thus again maintained. The man has successfully walked that path; the others in the narrative have not.

⁷⁹² cf. Bruce, John, 126; Barrett, John, 255; Beasley-Murray, John, 74; Milne, John, 96; Lindars (John, 217) prefers a combination of both; Davids (“A Biblical...”, 117) suggests that it refers to an illness; Schnackenburg (John III, (1980) 98) suggests death.

⁷⁹³ cf. Robertson, A. T., A Grammar of the Greek New Testament, London:HS (1919) 890.

⁷⁹⁴ cf. Sanders, John, 162; Barrett, John, 255; Schnackenburg, John, 2. 97; Ellis, John, 89; Wilkinson, J., “Healing in the Fourth Gospel”, SJT, 20. 4 (1967) 455.

Conclusion

Insofar as the healing forms the basis of a wider discussion concerning the person of Jesus, it is accurate to state that what is important to the narrative is not the healing by Jesus but the person of Jesus.⁷⁹⁵ As far as the Jews are concerned, Jesus is claiming to be equal to God and in this light, the healing performed pales into insignificance as far as the story teller is concerned. The issue is not whether or how Jesus healed the man but who Jesus is. Thus, the final words of the pericope, contained in the phrase "Will you believe?", are a crucial marker in the literary presentation of the author. The tragedy is that the healing will be insufficient to convince many of the legitimate claims of Jesus and they will not believe. The author's hope is that his readers will be more observant.

⁷⁹⁵ cf. Witherington, John's..., 145.

Major themes of the healing accounts

Introduction

It has been established thus far that the healings of Jesus function as narrational forms of teaching, the information imparted relating to important issues concerning Jesus and one's response to him. These and other elements of teaching are located in all the other healing narratives in the Gospels in which their catalytic function to teach takes precedence over the occurrence of the healing itself. Whilst agreeing with Bligh's⁷⁹⁶ basic premise that the healings were also meant "to point to something else", it will be further demonstrated how the acts of physical salvation were secondary to revelations of truth. The previous claims that because Jesus healed, it is to be expected that believers may emulate him, are to be critiqued in the light of this feature. His ministry of healing was intended to establish truth about himself rather than to act as a healing model. Of significance is the fact that Jesus does not suggest that illness may have a pedagogical value, only the healing. In this regard, a marked distinction is to be noted between the ministry of Jesus and that of his followers, as reflected in the representative individuals and denominations analysed earlier. This feature is by way of contrast to other passages in the New Testament where sickness does appear to have positive value (2 Cor. 12:7ff; Gal. 4:13) and where sin may have caused the physical

⁷⁹⁶ Bligh, J., "Signs and Wonders. Contemplating the miracles of the Gospels", The Way, 11 (1971) 44f.

problem (Acts 5:1ff; 1 Cor. 12:30; Jas. 5:15f). In this regard, Jesus is to be distinguished from other healers in the Church; his mission is different and his healing ministry is thus to be viewed uniquely. The first major issue concerns the authority of Jesus.

The Authority of Jesus

This aspect has largely been addressed in the previous section. Jesus is presented as having authority to heal sicknesses⁷⁹⁷ and to raise from the dead.⁷⁹⁸ Harris⁷⁹⁹ is partially correct in his assumption that the significance of the healings is located in the fact that "They demonstrated the power of Jesus", though it is more likely that raw power was not the main focus but that which the power represented in terms of authority. Wallis,⁸⁰⁰ more accurately, describes the significance of the healings of Jesus as "the authentication of His pedigree," legitimising his message and role as messenger. They provide evidence that he operates in the authority of the Spirit (Matt. 12:28) which is evidence that he ministers in the tradition of the Old Testament.⁸⁰¹

⁷⁹⁷ Mt. 8:16ff//s; 8:28-34//s; 12:15-21//s; 12:22-29//s; 13:51-58//s; 14:34-36//s; Mk. 1:23-28//s; 7:31ff; Lk. 1:20ff; 13:32.

⁷⁹⁸ Mt. 9:18f; 23-26//s.

⁷⁹⁹ Harris, M.J., "The Dead are restored to Life: Miracles of Revivification in the Gospels", Gospel Perspectives: The Miracles of Jesus 6, (eds.) Wenham, D., Blomberg, C., Sheffield:JSOT Press (1987) 318.

⁸⁰⁰ Wallis, I.G., "Christ's continuing ministry of Healing", ET, 104.2 (1992) 43; cf. Kee, Medicine..., 161, 188; van Eck, "Sickness...", 44; Richardson, The Miracle..., 17; Fridrichsen, A., The Problem of Miracle in Primitive Christianity, Minneapolis:Augsburg (1972) 60; Pilch, "Understanding...", 65; Kingsbury, J.D., Conflict in Mark: Jesus, authorities, disciples, Minneapolis: Fortress Press (1989) 65-88.

⁸⁰¹ cf. Eichrodt, W., Theology of the Old Testament, Philadelphia:Westminster (1961) 2.

He is also described as having the authority to incorporate the outcast and initiate the Kingdom, both of which are demonstrated by his healings. The latter is confirmed by the number of occasions in which the healings of Jesus are seen to be the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy.⁸⁰²

He is also viewed as having authority concerning issues related to the Jewish Law, including the Sabbath,⁸⁰³ purity laws⁸⁰⁴ and the Temple.⁸⁰⁵ In a cosmic context, he is presented as being supreme over all the forces of darkness, their domination over the lives of people being broken with ease when he confronts them, Meyer⁸⁰⁶ specifically describing the message of Mark as being that "Jesus is the power over every evil power". This is reflected in the incisive and effective ways that Jesus overcomes his opponents.⁸⁰⁷

The healings of Jesus were achieved against a background in Judaism in which not only was Yahweh the one who inflicted people with sickness,⁸⁰⁸ but more importantly, he was the one who healed sickness,⁸⁰⁹ sometimes through his prophets.⁸¹⁰ Jesus is seen to undertake the latter role while Jewish official

61; Dunn, J.D.G., "Spirit and Kingdom", ET, 82 (1970f) 36-40.

⁸⁰² Mt. 8:16f; 11:14//s; 12:15ff.

⁸⁰³ Lk. 13:10ff; 14:1ff; Jn. 5:1-14; 9:1-41.

⁸⁰⁴ Mt. 8:2-4//s; 9:20-22//s; Lk. 7:11ff.

⁸⁰⁵ Mt. 21:14.

⁸⁰⁶ "Psalm 107...", 12; cf. Blackburn, B.L., "Miracles and Miracle Stories", DJG, (eds.) Green, J.B., McKnight, S., Marshall, I.H., Leicester:IVP (1992) 552; Telford, W.R., Mark, Sheffield:Sheffield Academic Press (1995) 128; Blomberg, C.L., "Healing", DJG, 302.

⁸⁰⁷ Mk. 2:8-11; 3:4, 23-27.

⁸⁰⁸ Gen. 12:17; Ex. 9:8ff; Lev. 21:18ff; Num. 11:33; Deut. 28:22ff; 1 Sam. 5:6; 2 Sam. 24:15; 2 Kings 5:26f.

⁸⁰⁹ Gen. 20:17; Ex. 15:26; Deut. 32:39; Job 5:17f.

⁸¹⁰ Num. 16:47ff; 2 Sam. 24:16; 1 Kings 17:17ff; 2 Kings 4:18ff.

religion, the apparent representative of God, is powerless. However, his healings are reminiscent of the creative ability and activity of God himself.⁸¹¹ The healings of Jesus are presented as manifestations of "his personal divinity".⁸¹² Dwyer⁸¹³ perceptively writes, "Humanity...trembles in awe before that which is simply 'other'. The incredible thing is that the 'other' has come to save and heal".

Thus, Jesus is not recorded as praying for the healing of the sick. Instead, the sickness is removed, often with a word or command.⁸¹⁴ Although Jesus prayed on occasions of healing miracles,⁸¹⁵ the text does not state that it was in order to gain power from the Father or to ask the Father to achieve the healing. Brown,⁸¹⁶ on the basis of Luke 4:18f argues, "Having proclaimed liberty to the captives, Jesus purposefully went about setting them free", thus helping to explain why it is not recorded that Jesus prayed for the healing of the sick. In this regard, it is clear that Jesus heals in a manner different to the guidelines offered by James 5:13-16 where prayer is of central importance. Prayer is a common feature in healing scenarios today, as has been demonstrated, indicating an emulation of James, not Jesus.

⁸¹¹ Hendrickx (H., The Miracle Stories of the Synoptic Gospels, San Francisco: Harper and Row (1987) 13) links the phrase "He does all things well" (Mk. 7:37) with the affirmations offered after the creative acts of God recorded in Genesis 1.

⁸¹² Jn. 5:2-47; cf. Brown, C., That you may believe: Miracles and Faith Then and Now, Grand Rapids:Eerdmans (1985) 97.

⁸¹³ Dwyer, T., "The Motif of Wonder in the Gospel of Mark", JSNT, 57 (1995) 202.

⁸¹⁴ Matt. 8:1-3; 12:9-13; Mk. 5:41f; 7:31ff; Lk. 13:10-16.

⁸¹⁵ Mk. 7:34 (?); Jn. 11:41.

⁸¹⁶ Israel's..., 217.

The revelation of this authenticating authority is noted also in the healing narratives including the following examples. In the story of the healing of Peter's mother-in-law,⁸¹⁷ Jesus heals her of a fever, described by Luke as a high or great fever.⁸¹⁸ Each Synoptic account includes a dimension, extra to the healing, that establishes the authoritative significance of the healer.

Matthew records it as the third specific healing by Jesus in a collection of nine miracles in two chapters, seven of which are healings. As such, it provides evidence for his claim (v. 17) that Jesus was a living fulfilment of Isaiah 53:4, the promised Messiah. Mark places it as the first of his recorded healings and before the first general statement concerning Jesus' healings and the commencement of his first preaching tour. The healing is of a woman, a disenfranchised member of Jewish society; the first person to benefit from the healing activity of Jesus is a marginalised figure. For Luke also, it is his first recorded healing. Luke rearranges the Markan account so that Simon's mother-in-law is healed before Simon is referred to, thus exalting her in the attention of Jesus, and before he and the other disciples are called, so affirming Jesus as the sovereign healer who needs no team to help him.

Each Synoptist refers to the immediacy of the cure. Matthew records Jesus as taking the initiative in the healing, Luke presents Jesus as rebuking the fever whereupon it leaves her while Mark refers to the fact that Jesus lifted her up. Matthew and Mark mention that Jesus touched her, such an action being

⁸¹⁷ Matt. 8:14f//Mk. 1:29ff//Lk. 4:38ff.

⁸¹⁸ 4:38; Davies and Allison (Matthew, 2.34) suggest malaria.

forbidden according to Rabbinic tradition.⁸¹⁹ All the above features accentuate the authority of Jesus.

It may also be of significance to note that fever was viewed as a divine punishment in Rabbinic literature⁸²⁰ and also as being demonically caused.⁸²¹

Nevertheless, Jesus authoritatively effects a healing. In this context, the reference in Luke 4:39 to Jesus rebuking the fever may be significant especially in that the word used, "ἐπιτιμᾶω", is also used immediately before (4:35) and after (4:41) in the contexts of Jesus rebuking demons.⁸²² Luke appears to be presenting the illness in the context of a demonic origin.

However, given that the word is used elsewhere in a non-demonic context, it is not necessary to view it as inevitably indicating an exorcism here.⁸²³ Although

⁸¹⁹ SB, 1. 479f; cf Acts 28:8; Hagner (Matthew, 208) views this as of central importance; cf. Hooker, Mark, 70; contra Gundry, Mark, 87.

⁸²⁰ b. Ber. 34b; Philo, On Rewards and Punishments, 143.

⁸²¹ b. Ned. 41a; Git. 70a; cf. Garland, "I am...", 334.

⁸²² In Matt. 17:18; Mk. 1:25; 3:12; Lk. 9:42, it is used in the context of an exorcism; Mk. 8:33 records its use by Jesus of Peter's unwitting representation of Satan; see 1QM 14:10; 1QapGen 20:28f where the rebuke involves exorcisms (and also includes prayer and the laying on of hands) and PGM 1.254, 7.332, 12.316 (Betz, H.D., in The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation, Chicago: Chicago University Press (1985)) where it is used in a non-exorcistic, magical context, albeit later than the current era.

⁸²³ cf. Gundry (Mark, 84); contra Heil, The Gospel..., 50; Kee (H.C., "The terminology of Mark's Exorcism Stories", NTS, 14 (1967/68) 232-246) rejects the translation of "rebuke", arguing that although its use in 1QM 14:10 is "to describe the act of bringing the evil spirits into subjection and routing them", in the majority of the occasions it is used in the MT, "the meaning is to overcome the enemies of God and his purposes" (Deut. 28:20; Ps. 9:6, 66:15, 68:31, 76:6, 80:16, 119:21, Is. 33:17, 51:20; 54:9; Mal. 2:3 (235f); similarly, the use of "ἐπιτιμᾶω" in Mark 1:25//Luke 4:35 demonstrates the subjugation of the enemies of Jesus, indicating his authority (Matt. 8:26; Mk. 3:12, 8:30; Lk. 8:24, 9:55) rather than an exorcistic term of rebuke. Rather than Jesus being seen simply expelling the demons from the man, he is seen as defeating them; similarly, its use in Mark 4:39 does not necessarily mean that a demonic power initiated the storm but that he subjugated the power of that which acted as an

not an exorcism, oppression by the devil is anticipated.⁸²⁴ That which may be determined is that whatever the origin or identity of the sickness, Jesus deals with it effortlessly and immediately.

That Luke records Jesus standing over the woman has been commented on, Derrett⁸²⁵ suggesting that such a pose was understood as representing the importance of spatial dimension in the receipt of divine blessings. However, the importance of the position of the person ministering to another is not proven despite Derrett's claim that "one blesses from above, not sideways, or from below".⁸²⁶ There is a certain inevitability that Jesus would be standing over the sick woman; to suggest that he adopts a particular positional approach to provide greater power for himself lacks evidence, calls into question the power resident within him and is not reflected elsewhere in other miracles he achieved. It is more likely a comment to indicate the severity of

obstacle to his destiny by a word of command; Kee ("The terminology...", 241) notes that the term is absent from Hellenistic literature that comments on exorcisms or records exorcism stories; Fitzmyer (Luke, 1.550) suggests, "It is introduced as a catchword with vv. 35, 41" to "depict Jesus making use of the commanding word of salvation and deliverance"; Lane (Mark, 130) describes it as "the divine word of rebuke (2 Sam. 22:16; Job 26:11; Ps. 68:31; 80:16; 104:7; 106:9; Zech. 3:2)"; cf. Cranfield, Mark, 77.

⁸²⁴ Green (Luke, 225) suggests that oppression by the Devil is anticipated.

⁸²⁵ Derrett, J.D.M., "Getting on top of a demon (Lk. 4:39)", EQ, 65.2 (1993) 99-109; his quotation of Deut 28:13, 59 to show that God puts blessings or ailments upon the people from above is more likely an accommodation to their belief that God resides above them, rather than that he has specifically gravitationally induced power. Similarly, though he refers to the woman with the haemorrhage placing herself below Jesus while he placed himself above her (Lk. 8:44) as confirmation of his theory, the text does not reflect this nor does it indicate any perception that position is relevant to cure. It is her faith, not spatial dimensions, that is presented by Jesus as being foundational to her restoration. Green (Luke, 225) prefers to see it in relation to authority over demonic forces.

⁸²⁶ ibid, 103.

her condition that she lay on her bed and the miraculous nature of her restoration in that she immediately rose and served them. The authority of Jesus over sickness is proven in the healing not the pose.

Thus, a number of important principles are recorded in this healing account. Issues introduced including Jesus' ministry to the marginalised and the valid response of service will be developed later in another context. However, it is the authority of Jesus that is the supreme motif of importance here.⁸²⁷

In the story of the restoration of the Ruler's daughter (Matt. 9:18f//s), the focus is again not on physical restoration but the identification of Jesus as the one who has the authority over death.⁸²⁸ This is particularly clear in Matthew's account where his presentation of the authority of Jesus continues to be developed. The previous two sections in which Jesus demonstrates his authority to forgive sins, offer the opportunity for Matthew to show Jesus' authority to eat with whoever he wishes, including sinners (vs. 9-13) and his authority concerning fasting, leading to his statements concerning the new era he is introducing (vs. 14-17). Now, Matthew reveals Jesus' authority over death; the authentication of his person is confirmed by his action.⁸²⁹ No faith is mentioned, the crowds laugh in disbelief but Jesus restores the child to life.

⁸²⁷ Bastin (M., "Jesus worked miracles", LV, 39.2 (1984) 139) suggests the brevity of the narrative further emphasises the motif of authority.

⁸²⁸ cf. Hedrick, C.W., "Miracle Stories as Literary Compositions: The case of Jairus' daughter", PRS, 20.3 (1993) 231

⁸²⁹ Although it may be suggested that the healings were meant to indicate Jesus' divinity, it is to be remembered that Jesus' opponents also functioned supernaturally (Mt. 7:15-23; 12:27//Lk. 11:19; 24:24; see also 2 Thess. 2:9; similar claims for divinity by other miracle workers are considered by Meier (A

The demonstration of the authority of Jesus via his healings is not to be understood as an end in itself but as a means to an end. It functions as a springboard from which a leap of faith may result in a relationship being developed. However, although many welcomed his authority over sickness, only a few recognised the potential of developing beyond this. This authority motif is demonstrated in a number of other actions that will now be analysed.

The reinstatement of the outcast

(See also Matthew 8:2-4//s; 9:20-22//s; 15:21-28//s; Luke 13:10-17; 17:11-19)

The healing ministry of Jesus simultaneously reflects the mystery of God and that of the incarnation in that it is an expression of God acting through Christ for the benefit of a helpless humanity. Schnackenburg⁸³⁰ thus describes Jesus as the one who "liberates people from their ostracism among the people and their guilt and redeems them from their misery...Jesus is the Savior in a comprehensive sense". Percy⁸³¹ perceptively argues that to view the healings

Marginal..., 2. 576-601) and Evans, C.A., "Jesus and Jewish Miracle Stories", (213-243) and "Jesus and Apollonius of Tyana", 245-250, Jesus and His Contemporaries, (ed.) Evans, C.A., Leiden:Brill (1995)). If the miracles were intended to provide proof of divinity, there is little reason for him to have restricted the testimonies of those healed as he did; cf. Dunn, Jesus..., 74; Melinsky, M.A.H., Healing Miracles, London:Mowbray (1968) 18f; Richardson, The Miracle..., 20f; contra Loos, The Healings..., 184.

⁸³⁰ Jesus..., 313; cf. Turner, M., Power from on High: The Spirit in Israel's Restoration and Witness in Luke-Acts, Sheffield:Sheffield Academic Press (1996) 226f.

⁸³¹ Percy, "Christ...", 122; cf. Wire (A.C., "The Structure of the gospel miracle stories and their tellers", Semeia, 11 (1978) 83-113) believes that they reveal less about Jesus' status and more about the transforming impact of the miracles on

of Jesus as demonstrative acts of power only is to miss "the original context and target of Jesus' healings which had radical potential, social and political dynamics that were usually missed in their day, but should not be ignored today". However, the textual evidence indicates that the healings of Jesus were controversial in that they positively impacted the socially and ceremonially marginalised. Many of the religious populace reacted against him because of them. Nevertheless, Percy's initial and fundamental perception is valid. Saucy⁸³² also explores the importance of the healing ministry of Jesus as an abrogation of "essential elements" in Jewish culture including the issue of purity (Lev. 19:2) in that Jesus mingled with and contacted the outcasts and unclean and revealed that purity was an issue of the heart. Very few rich people are seen to be the recipients of his healing ministry, while a majority are drawn from the poor sectors of society including beggars, women, children and those who are ceremonially unclean, Jesus' role being to dissolve barriers that normally separated people.⁸³³ Myers⁸³⁴ characterises the central aspect of the healing ministry of Jesus as his desire "to restore the *social* wholeness denied to the sick/impure". Although he centralises the purpose of Jesus in

oppressed people.

⁸³² Saucy, "Miracles...", 295; cf. Neusner, J., The Idea of Purity in Ancient Judaism, Leiden: Brill (1973) 28; Kee, Medicine..., 78; Comber, J.A., "The verb 'therapeuo' in Matthew's Gospel", JBL, 97 (Sept. 1978) 433f; Carroll, J. T., "Sickness and Healing in the New Testament Gospels", Interpretation, 49.2 (1995) 138.

⁸³³ cf. Green, J., The Theology of the Gospel of Luke, Cambridge: CUP (1995) 90.

⁸³⁴ Binding..., 146; cf. van Eck, "Sickness...", 29, 34, 40; Theissen, G., Miracle Stories of the Early Christian Tradition, Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark (1983) 252; Moltmann, J., The Way of Jesus Christ: Christology in Messianic Dimension, London: SCM (1990) 110; Frank, D., Tough Questions about Healing, Guildford: Highland (1994) 81f; Wright, N.T., Jesus and the Victory of God, London: SPCK (1996) 191f.

healing in too narrow a context, he is right to draw attention to this integrative element. Although it is difficult to determine how far this exclusion was reflected throughout Palestine, the impression of the Gospels is that it probably was.⁸³⁵ Crossan⁸³⁶ assumes Jesus only healed the "illness" (i.e., ritual uncleanness and social ostracism) though did not cure the "disease" but this arbitrary distinction is not reflected in the text in which both aspects are transformed by Jesus.

Matthew records the substantial nature of Jesus' healing ministry as being compassionately directed to people on the perimeter of society.⁸³⁷ In Matthew 12:15-21, the author records a quotation, freely adapted, from Isaiah 42:1-4,⁸³⁸ which is applied to Jesus with the specific notation that Jesus has fulfilled it. Insofar as the passage is a description of God's servant upon whom he will place his Spirit, this provides substantial support for the authority and status of Jesus. Most importantly, it reveals that his ministry is prophesied in the Old Testament as being to the weak, the uninfluential and the Gentiles.

In Matthew 21:14, the author uniquely records that Jesus healed the blind and the lame in the Temple immediately after he cleansed it. It results in indignation on the part of the religious leaders. It appears that Matthew

⁸³⁵ cf. Wenham, G., "Christ's healing ministry and His attitude to the Law", Christ the Lord, (ed.) Rowdon, H.H., Leicester:IVP (1982) 115-126, esp. 122-124.

⁸³⁶ Crossan, J.D., Jesus. A Revolutionary Biography, San Francisco:Harper (1994) 82.

⁸³⁷ 8:1-4; 5-13; 9:1-7, 27-30; 14:14; 15:22; 20:30-34.

⁸³⁸ cf. Neyrey, J.H., "The Thematic Use of Isaiah 42:1-4 in Matthew 12", Biblica, 63 (1982) 457-473.

inserted this information as a demonstration of the appropriate activity that should be taking place in the Temple in contrast to the financial activities previously described (vs. 12f). Insofar as this is the only occasion in Matthew in which Jesus is recorded as healing in the Temple, it signals the commencement of a new era in which he ministers within the Temple, in particular, healing those who were previously excluded from it (2 Sam. 5:8).⁸³⁹ Not only are they welcomed, coming to him in the Temple, but also they are healed and given the opportunity to worship unhindered in the presence of God. The old community has had the opportunity to accept him also (21:23, 26:60-63) but it rejects him and he it. Instead, he establishes a new community of people who are allowed to enter the presence of God in a way previously barred to them. That this is the final record of a healing activity by Jesus in Matthew serves as a climax to his mission, reflecting a healing ministry dedicated to those on the margins of society.

This dedication to the marginalised is also located in Mark's presentation of Jesus' healing ministry, healing non-Jews (7:24-30, 5:1-20, 7:31-37) and the ritually impure (1:40-45, 5:25-34). This emphasis in Mark is particularly articulated by Van Eck and Van Aarde although they wrongly assume that all illnesses resulted in social ostracism.⁸⁴⁰ Granted that sick folk might not participate in some aspects of societal life, it should not be assumed that this was the only reason for the therapeutic attentions of Jesus. Any societal

⁸³⁹ cf. France, Matthew, 302; Patte, Matthew, 288; Gundry, R.H., The Use of the Old Testament in St. Matthew's Gospel, Leiden: Brill (1967) 140, 200.

⁸⁴⁰ Van Eck, "Sickness...", 29-51; cf. Neyrey, J.H., "The Idea of Purity in Mark's Gospel", Semeia, 35 (1986) 91-128.

marginalisation was limited mainly to those illnesses that involved an Old Testament interdiction based on ceremonial reasoning. However, Van Eck⁸⁴¹ is correct to interpret the healings as Jesus "restoring people to their proper functions in the context of kinship or household relationships". The healing of the leper (Mark 1:40-45//s) is the clearest opportunity to reveal a person reabsorbed into the community.

The process in which Jesus ministers to the marginalised sectors of Jewish society permeates the gospel of Luke,⁸⁴² it being initiated forcefully in Jesus' first recorded sermon at Nazareth (4:18ff). Hertig⁸⁴³ views this sermon as the introduction of a jubilee era that becomes programmatic for the gospel of Luke. In Luke 7:11-17 is a unique description of Jesus raising the son of the widow of Nain, this following his healing of a ruler's servant. After describing a miracle wrought for an important establishment figure, Luke characteristically includes a story relating to Jesus' ministry to one who represents the marginalised sector of society, a widow who has only one child. He focuses attention on this woman by referring to her seven times, including the fact that Jesus personally hands back her son to her. Luke also records that Jesus acted out of compassion.⁸⁴⁴ There is no reference to the faith of the woman or of a request being made that he might intervene, in contrast to the previous miracle account. Instead, Luke presents Jesus as the supreme Saviour who takes the

⁸⁴¹ ibid, 50

⁸⁴² 8:48, 50; 17:11-19; cf. 5:27-32; 7:36-50; 12:32; 14:13f, 21; 19:1-10.

⁸⁴³ Hertig, P., "The Jubilee Mission of Jesus in the Gospel of Luke: Reversal of Fortunes", *Missiology*, 26.2 (1998) 167-179.

⁸⁴⁴ Campbell (D.K., "The Prince of Life at Nain", *BS*, 115 (Oct. 1958) 346) views it as the major theme of the account.

initiative, touching the bier and thus rendering himself unclean (Num. 19:10ff). He also, rather than praying, speaks to the deceased, commanding resurrection. Jesus ministers in authority to one who has little and who has lost her main possession, her son. Again, the healing is of less significance than that which it portrays about himself and his mission.

Compassion was an important motivation in the healings of Jesus⁸⁴⁵ but not the prime motivation⁸⁴⁶ and Lewis speculates dangerously that God has "a bias to the poor".⁸⁴⁷ Hagin's claim, that if healing is not God's purpose today, Christ's compassion towards the sick has been reduced, is unbiblical. Matthew only refers to compassion in 20:34, 14:14; Mark, at best, once (1:41);⁸⁴⁸ Luke once

⁸⁴⁵ Matt. 14:14; 20:34; Mk. 1:41; 5:19; Lk. 7:13 (cf. Mk. 9:22 where his compassion is appealed to); cf. Bailey, K.M., Divine Healing. The Children's Bread, Camp Hill:Christian Publs. (1977) 98f; Larson, E.L., & B.M., "A Philosophy of Healing from the Ministry of Jesus", FT, 112 (1986) 67, 73; Baldwin, Healing..., 157-160; Harris, "The Dead...", 319; Maddocks, The Christian..., 59; Scott, Healing..., 75; Go, "Healing...", 51; Carlson, "A Healing...", 25.

⁸⁴⁶ Contra Richards, The Church's..., 14; Deere, J., Surprised by the Power of the Spirit, Eastbourne:Kingsway (1993) 120.

⁸⁴⁷ Lewis, D., Healing. Fiction, Fantasy or Fact?, London:HS (1989) 268; cf. Sheppard, D., Bias to the Poor, London:HS (1983) 9-18.

⁸⁴⁸ The better manuscripts have "splanchnistheis", a minority having "ὀργισθεῖς"; cf. Cranfield (Mark, 92) comments favourably on the variant "ὀργισθεῖς" instead of "σπλαγχνῖσθεῖς" (cf. Guelich, Mark, 1.74; Lane, Mark, 84 n.141; Hooker, Mark, 78ff; 187; Cave, "The Leper...", 246). Cranfield writes that it is easier to see why an original "ὀργισθεῖς" should have been altered to "σπλαγχνῖσθεῖς", but not vice versa. Moreover, he notes neither Matthew or Luke use the latter, which would be surprising if it was originally in Mark (so Martin, R.P., Mark: Evangelist and Theologian, Exeter:Paternoster Press (1972) 121). However, Hooker writes (Mark, 80) if the original text referred to Jesus' anger, this would explain why Matthew and Luke omit the reference to Jesus' emotion altogether. By way of explanation, Cranfield suggests that the most likely reason for anger on the part of Jesus was "with Satan at his disfigurement of God's creature" (cf. Hooker, Mark, 80; Lane, Mark, 86; Guelich, Mark, 1. 74); Gundry (Mark, 96) suggests it is anger against sin while Taylor (Mark, 188) believes it is anger at the disease itself; Guelich (Mark, 1. 74) suggests that Jesus may be expressing

(7:13) and John never. Wacker⁸⁴⁹ writes, "the principal purpose of Jesus' miracles was not compassion but revelation". Indeed, if it was proven that compassion was the major motive or even a significantly important one, it would be appropriate to consider why Jesus did not heal all the sick in the region. John 5:3-5 is a clear example where he chose not to heal all, but only one.

It is in the context of ministry to the marginalised that the use of his hands in healing is of significance, Borobio describing the laying on of hands as "Jesus' preferred gesture of healing".⁸⁵⁰ This is a radical departure from normative Jewish practice for Jesus touched those who were ill. Lalleman⁸⁵¹ convincingly demonstrates that evidence of healing via the use of the hands indicates it to be a Christian concept initiated by Jesus. On a number of occasions, Jesus

anger at the man for approaching despite being unclean; however, Jesus voluntarily touches the man, not restrains him; Hooker (Mark, 80; Gundry, Mark, 96) rightly notes that for Mark, "preaching and healing go hand in hand", and thus rejects any idea that Jesus was angry because his opportunity to teach had been interrupted; Bruner (Matthew, 1. 300), with insufficient evidence, suggests that Jesus was angry because the leper doubted his willingness to heal; however, Metzger (B.M., A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament, Stuttgart:Deutsches Bibelgesellschaft (1994) 65), providing the conclusions of the editorial committee of the UBS Greek New Testament, notes, "the character of the external evidence in support of ὀργισθεις" is less impressive than the diversity and character of evidence that supports σπλαγχνίσθεις"; Mk. 3:5, where Jesus is described as angry and 10:14, where he is referred to as indignant, "have not prompted over-scrupulous copyists to make corrections". Some (Gundry, Mark, 95; Hurtado, Mark, 30; 65) suggest that ὀργισθεις" was added due to the presence of ἐμβριμεσάμενος" though this presumes that the latter has a negative connotation.

⁸⁴⁹ "Wimber...", TRJ, 37 (April 1987) 17.

⁸⁵⁰ "An Enquiry...", 39

⁸⁵¹ Lalleman, P.J., "Healing by a mere touch as a Christian Concept", TB, 48.2 (1997) 355ff.

touches those to whom he ministers.⁸⁵² At other times, people seek to touch Jesus⁸⁵³ or his clothes.⁸⁵⁴ Yamauchi views the importance of the laying on of hands on the part of Jesus as imparting compassion, itself a therapeutic agency.⁸⁵⁵ Although there is value in this suggestion, it is more accurate to note with Dunn⁸⁵⁶ that, "The use of the hand...was probably seen as an act of prophetic symbolism-the hand of the healer representing the hand of the Lord-the real power behind the healing". There is Old Testament precedent for the hand being perceived as a personification of the power of God.⁸⁵⁷ Although the use of a hand does not occur in the Old Testament in healings,⁸⁵⁸ it is included in the LXX account of Elisha's provision of healing for Naaman (2 Kings 5:11). More importantly, the use of the hand may be understood in a healing context of indicating to the ceremonially unclean that although the uncleanness may not be transferred to Jesus, he desires to reveal his readiness to transmit his wholeness.⁸⁵⁹ Of the record of Jesus touching a leper

⁸⁵² Matt. 8:3, 15; 9:29; 17:7; 20:34; Mk. 5:41; 7:33; 10:46-52; Lk. 7:14; 13:13; 22:51; Jn. 9:6.

⁸⁵³ Mk. 3:10; 6:56; 8:22; Lk. 6:19.

⁸⁵⁴ Matt. 9:20; Mk. 14:36.

⁸⁵⁵ Yamauchi, "Magic...", 136; cf. Weatherhead, L., "Present day non-medical methods of healing", Religion and Medicine, (ed.) Crowlesmith, J., London: Epworth Press (1962) 57; Thomas, Z., Healing Touch, Louisville: Westminster (1994) 45; Vaughan, Saints..., 24; Tuckwell, G., Flagg, D., "The Importance of Touch", HW, 13 (Jan-March 1994) 10-13; Maddocks, The Christian..., 121.

⁸⁵⁶ Jesus..., 165.

⁸⁵⁷ Num. 11:23; 33:3; Deut. 33:3; 1 Sam. 5:7; 6:5; 1 Chron. 29:12; Job 5:18; Pss. 20:12, 21:8; 31:5; 38:2; Is. 1:25, 11:11; Jer. 16:21; Dan. 5:23; Zech. 13:7; cf. Wagenvoort, H., "Contactus", RAC, 3 (1957) 404-421.

⁸⁵⁸ cf. Sullivan, F.A., "The Laying on of hands in Christian Tradition", Spirit and Renewal, (ed.) Wilson, M., Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press (1994) 42-54.

⁸⁵⁹ Maddocks (The Christian..., 121) draws a parallel with the rabbinic practice of adopting pupils by the laying on of hands, suggesting that "when used for healing, the laying on of hands draws the sufferer more closely into the body of Christ so that the health of Jesus may be received".

(Matt. 8:2-4//Mk. 1:40-45//Lk. 5:12-16), Loader writes, "Jesus crosses the boundaries, touching the leper and healing him".⁸⁶⁰ It emphasises his determination to break barriers caused by illness which resulted in the isolation of those who were so afflicted. Thus, Jesus functions in the line of Old Testament revelation, placing his hand, representing power, on people who are poor and powerless; direct contact with the powerful one is not obstructed by illness that may be penalising and marginalising. Jesus employs a gesture that reflects a willingness to touch the untouchable, resonates with the Old Testament image of the infusion of God's power through the hand and indicates an authority to transform without being tainted.

Thus, the Gospel miracles are to be understood as "a record of Christ reaching out to the marginalised, dispossessed, cast out and cursed in society and from faith communities".⁸⁶¹ Those who claim to emulate Jesus should note Pain's deduction, "we need to recapture this stress and turn our healing attention to the tramps, addicts...without neglecting the ordinary people who fill our tower blocks and estates".⁸⁶² Thus, where the compassion of Jesus is mentioned, it is most clearly viewed as part of his Messianic initiative to institute the Kingdom and to incorporate those for whom society has been able to offer little more than pity or rejection. Thus, the mercy of Jesus is revealed whilst

⁸⁶⁰ Loader, "Challenged...", 56; cf. Pilch, "Understanding...", 65.

⁸⁶¹ Percy, "Christ...", 118, 120f; cf. "The Gospel...", 11, 14.

⁸⁶² Pain, T., "Jesus' healing ministry", *HW*, 4 (Oct-Dec 1991) 32f; cf. Wright, *Charismatic...*, 76f; Percy, "Christ...", 113; Wire, "The Structure...", 110.

presenting him as fulfilling the prophecies concerning a new age in which God's mercy would be revealed.⁸⁶³

The initiation of the Kingdom

(See also Matthew 10:1, 8//s, 12:22-29//s; Luke 10:8, 17-20)

1. This motif is often recorded in the context of the healing ministry of Jesus,⁸⁶⁴ Moltmann⁸⁶⁵ stating that after the proclamation of the Gospel, “the healing of the sick is Jesus’ most important testimony to the dawning of the Kingdom of God”. It was anticipated in later Judaism⁸⁶⁶ and in Qumran⁸⁶⁷ that the Kingdom of God would be introduced with healings achieved by Messiah. It was also stressed as an important feature related to Jesus' healings by early Church leaders such as Justin,⁸⁶⁸ Irenaeus,⁸⁶⁹ Lanctantius,⁸⁷⁰ Origen⁸⁷¹ and Tertullian.⁸⁷²

The major distinction between Jesus and those of his followers who were recorded as healing people is that he came to initiate the Kingdom of God; therefore, his healings are to be recognised as having

⁸⁶³ Is. 14:1, 49:13, 54:8, 55:3; Jer. 12:15, 33:26; Ezek. 39:25; Micah 7:20; Zech. 1:16.

⁸⁶⁴ Matt. 4:23, 9:35, 10:7f, 11:3ff, 12:28; Lk. 7:19-23, 9:1f, 10:9.

⁸⁶⁵ Moltmann, J., The Source of Life, (transl.) Kohl, M., London:SCM (1997) 64.

⁸⁶⁶ Test. Zeb. 9.8; Test. Jud. 18.12.

⁸⁶⁷ 4Q521.8, 12

⁸⁶⁸ Apol. 1.22f, 30f, 48; Dial. Trypho, 69; Adv. Haer., 2.32.4.

⁸⁶⁹ Ad. Haer., 4.33.11.

⁸⁷⁰ Divin. Inst. 5.3.18f.

⁸⁷¹ Origen, Contra Celsum, 2.48; 8.9.

⁸⁷² Adv. Marc. 3.3; 4.8-10

a unique function. His healings and resurrections are to be viewed as "a living foretoken of the resurrection".⁸⁷³ As sickness and death are reminders of this age, restoration is a reminder of the eschaton to come. This unprecedented role will now be explored.

Matthew 4:23f is one of many general references to the healing ministry of Jesus. However, this is the first occasion in which it is suggested that the ministry of Jesus would include healing. Its significance is that it links the teaching and preaching of the Kingdom with healing (9:35; 11:4f), all the verbs being provided in the present continuous tense suggesting an ongoing activity. Each healing is a manifestation of the Kingdom⁸⁷⁴ and Matthew integrates Jesus' healing miracles throughout his Gospel in order to emphasise Christological and soteriological characteristics.⁸⁷⁵ Melinsky⁸⁷⁶ affirms, "Jesus...by his acts proclaimed the coming of the Kingdom". As such, every healing anticipates the final

⁸⁷³ Moltmann, *The Way...*, 108.

⁸⁷⁴ Mussner (*The Miracles...*, 5-16) develops the OT theme of signs and wonders reflecting the purposes of God in establishing his kingship in a similar way in which signs and wonders in the ministry of Jesus established the Kingdom of God. It is to be remembered that Jesus viewed healing as an important part of his ministry (Matt. 11:4f, 20-30; Lk. 4:18f, 7:22; 10:13-15; 13:32). The relationship between healings and preaching is well established (Matt. 4:23; 9:6-8, 35; 10:1, 7f; Mk. 1:39; 6:7, 12f; Lk. 4:40-43; 5:15, 17; 6:17f, 9:6; 10:9; 13:22, 32; Jn. 11:47f); cf. Tagawa, K., *Miracles et évangile*, Paris:Presses Universitaires de France (1966) 87; Hofius, O., "Miracle", *NIDNTT*, Exeter:Paternoster Press (1975) 2.632f; Bruce, F.F., *The Hard Sayings of Jesus*, Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press (1983) 96f.

⁸⁷⁵ cf. Heil, "Significant...", 274-287.

⁸⁷⁶ *Healing...*, 21f, 24; cf. Hurding, R., "Healing", *Medicine and the Bible*, (ed.) Palmer, B., Carlisle:Paternoster Press (1992) 201; Brown, *Israel's...*, 216; Kelber, *The Kingdom...*, 17; Fuller, *Interpreting...*, 40; Thom, K., "Healing for What", *HW*, 20 (Oct/Dec 1995) 29.

victory over death⁸⁷⁷ and authenticates the message of the Kingdom.⁸⁷⁸ A motif of fulfilment is further identified in the presence of doublets in the healing accounts which emphasise the credibility of the miracles by their dual witness.⁸⁷⁹ They are signs of better things to come.⁸⁸⁰

Matthew 4:23-25 records Jesus healing in the context of his preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom; it is noteworthy that Matthew records Jesus teaching and preaching about the Kingdom before he refers to his healing ministry. In this pericope, the term "all" is used three times to describe the comprehensive nature of Jesus' healing ministry. It is difficult to determine whether the term is meant to be understood generally or comprehensively. Although the text suggests that all who were sick were healed, to reason that this included every sick person in Galilee and Syria seems unjustifiable. Indeed, Matthew 15:29ff reveals that on another occasion, many others from Galilee requested to be healed by Jesus. Rather, the author is intending to demonstrate the comprehensive power of Jesus over all kinds of illnesses, including severe diseases. It is in this respect that the inclusion of a reference to Galilee and Syria is understood; it emphasises the widespread effect of Jesus' ministry. His authority was such that even Syrians came for help to Jesus. It is this qualitative aspect that best demonstrates the

⁸⁷⁷ cf. Cullmann, Prayer..., 26.

⁸⁷⁸ cf. Johnson, S.L.Jr., "The Argument of Matthew", BS, 112 (April 1955) 147f; Richardson, The Miracle..., 38-58.

⁸⁷⁹ Mt. 9:27-31, 20:29-34 (see Deut. 19:15; Mt. 18:16, 19f).

⁸⁸⁰ cf. Pattison, Alive..., 79; Harvey, A.E., Jesus and the Constraints of History, Philadelphia: Westminster (1982) 98-120.

authority invested in Jesus, the initiator of the Kingdom, and that also describes the radical nature of the Kingdom that Jesus introduces.

Matthew places this pericope after Jesus' temptation in the wilderness and his move to Capernaum, which resulted in the commencement of his preaching ministry, and immediately after the choosing of his first four disciples. It is followed immediately by his Sermon on the Mount.

The references to healings are therefore contextualised in a framework of teaching related to the Kingdom and a call to discipleship.⁸⁸¹ Indeed, although the people may have followed Jesus to receive healings, he teaches them concerning the Kingdom as well. This level of priority is reflected also in Matthew in that it is only after the teaching passage (chs. 5-7) has been concluded that the author refers to a specific healing (8:2-4). The significance of the information provided therefore identifies the healing ministry of Jesus as only being valid in the context of the preaching of the Kingdom and as an expression of the Kingdom.

The relationship between healing and the Kingdom is also apparent in Mark.⁸⁸² For example, rather than be confined to Capernaum in order to engage in a healing ministry, Mark presents Jesus as moving on to fulfil his mission of preaching (1:37ff).

⁸⁸¹ Others (Thompson, "Reflections...", 366; Anderson, C., Matthew's Narrative Web: Over and Over and Over Again, Sheffield: JSOT Press (1994) 150f; Kingsbury, "Observations...", 566f) have suggested that the general healing references (4:23f; 9:35) open and close the Sermon (chs. 5-7) and the deeds of Messiah (chs. 8, 9).

⁸⁸² eg. 1:21-34; however, although the healings are presented as catalysts for teaching concerning the Kingdom in Mark, the latter is best reflected in the cross. He refers to Jesus often seeking to conceal the healings (1:34, 44f; 3:12;

For Luke, also, the significance of the healings is that they support the proclamation of the Kingdom rather than act as all important features in themselves. Uth⁸⁸³ notes that Luke records most of the miracle stories relating to Jesus in the account of the Galilean ministry (4:14-9:50), three are recorded during his journey to Jerusalem (9:51-18:34) while he states that none are located in the Passion narrative (18:35-24:53). On the basis of this, he writes, "Luke deliberately fronts the ministry of Jesus with the working of many miracles to illustrate the preaching of the gospel in word and deed...miracles are eschatological parables which demonstrate the breaking-in of God into history". He overlooks the healing of the ear of the high-priest's servant (22:50), an action that accentuates the saving ministry of Jesus, especially given its context of his arrest by those who seek to destroy him.⁸⁸⁴

Thus, each Synoptist views healing as a sign that God's reign was being established through Jesus. Carroll⁸⁸⁵ asserts, "In Jesus' ministry God's will is accomplished in concrete terms, for the sovereign rule of

5:43; 7:36). Mark spends more time proportionally on the final days of the life of Jesus and it is his mission that culminates in the cross that is the interpretative grid through which an accurate reading of the healings must be understood (cf. Carroll, "Sickness...", 132; Telford, Mark, 128; Weeden, T., Mark-Traditions in Conflict, Philadelphia:Fortress Press (1971) 55ff, 64; contra Theissen, The Miracle..., 294).

⁸⁸³ Uth, "An Eschatological...", 150.

⁸⁸⁴ cf. Soards, M. L., The Passion according to Luke, Sheffield:JSOT Press (1987) 100.

⁸⁸⁵ "Sickness...", 137; cf. Saucy, "Miracles...", 282; Vogtle, A., "The Miracles of Jesus against their contemporary background", Jesus in His Time, (ed.) Schultz, H.J., London:SPCK (1971) 101; Fitzmyer, Luke, 1.543; Latourelle, The Miracles..., 254; Mourlon, P.B., "Jesus Christ and Health: The Testimony of the Gospels", LV, 41.1 (1986) 35-48.

God is exerting itself', while Ladd⁸⁸⁶ aptly notes, "The evidence of the presence of the Kingdom was the healing of the sick". Although Wimber accepts this valid premise, he fails to recognise its implication with regard to Jesus' unique mission in initiating the Kingdom, a factor that must not be overlooked in determining the significance of his healing ministry and in explaining the inevitable dissimilarities between it and the experience of contemporary believers.

Loader⁸⁸⁷ describes the mission of Jesus as being to cleanse Israel from the reign and malign influences of Satan while Garrett,⁸⁸⁸ confining her comments to a survey of Luke-Acts, understands the purpose of the author to confirm "the demise of the devil". His Kingdom will end as a result of Jesus' Kingdom beginning, each healing indicating that this is occurring.

⁸⁸⁶ Ladd, G.E., The Gospel of the Kingdom, Grand Rapids:Eerdmans (1959) 49; cf. Bright, J., The Kingdom of God: The Biblical concept and its meaning for the Church, Nashville:Abingdon (1953) 218; Ridderbos, H., The Coming of the Kingdom of God, Philadelphia:Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., (1962) 65ff; Ramsey, A.M., Christianity and the Supernatural, London: Athlone Press (1963) 7; Glasswell, M.E., "The use of miracles in the Markan Gospel", Miracles, (ed.) Moule, C.F.D., London:Mowbrays (1965) 151-162; Hunter, A.M., The Work and Words of Jesus, London:SCM (1973) 55; Beernaert, P.M., "Jesus Christ and Health", LV, 41.4 (1986) 46.

⁸⁸⁷ Loader, W.R.G., "Son of David, Blindness, Possession, and Duality in Matthew", CBQ, 44 (1982) 570-585; cf. Kallas, The Significance..., 79; Moltmann, The Way..., 99 .

⁸⁸⁸ Garrett, S.R., The Demise of the Devil, Minneapolis:Fortress Press (1989) 109 (37-43); cf. Twelftree, G., "EI/DE...EGO EKBALLO TA DAIMONIA, Gospel..., (eds.) Wenham et al, 392; Dunn, J.D.G., Twelftree, G. H., "Demon-Possession and Exorcism in the New Testament", Churchman, 94 (1980) 219.

In this context, the healings of Jesus authenticate him as Messiah.⁸⁸⁹ As Loos⁸⁹⁰ writes, "His 'being'...can be learnt from His works". Although there is limited direct evidence that the Messiah was expected to effect miracles, the miracles were understood by Jesus to be authenticators of his person and mission and Jewish literature does indicate the restorative and caring role of Messiah that implies a healing quality.⁸⁹¹ The significance of such a variety and number of healings in a first century context is to be emphasised, given the limited therapies available and the truncated life expectancy.⁸⁹² This needs to be borne in mind when one considers the healing ministry of Jesus. Although similar healings would cause astonishment today in the Western world, they would have had a more sensational effect in an era which lacked the sophistication of modern medicine. As such, they were suggestive of a new era being initiated by Jesus. The healings, though dramatic, pointed beyond themselves to a more comprehensive salvation available through Jesus.⁸⁹³

2. Jesus is presented in each of the Synoptics in the context of Old Testament comment on the role of Messiah. Matthew uses the term

⁸⁸⁹ Gross, Miracles..., 34; Harper, The Healings..., 19; Green, E.M.B., The Meaning of Salvation, London:HS (1962) 218-225; Brown, Israel's..., 225f; Held, "Matthew...", 253-264; Harris, The Dead..., 318; Vogel, A.A., God, Prayer and Healing, Leominster:Fowler Wright Books (1995) 122; Hooker, Mark, 72-74; Schnackenburg, Jesus..., 312.

⁸⁹⁰ The Healings..., 188.

⁸⁹¹ Is. 11:1ff; 35:5; Jer. 23:5f; Ezek. 34:23f; Ps. Sol. 17:23.

⁸⁹² Pilch, J.J., "Sickness and Long Life", BibT, 33 (Feb. 1995) 97.

⁸⁹³ cf. Witherington, "Salvation...", 150-165.

“Son of David” (9:27; 12:22f; 15:22; 20:30f) primarily to establish Jesus’ royal Messianic lineage.⁸⁹⁴ This however, is capable of being misunderstood by his readers as identifying Jesus as a dynamic warrior. Therefore, the majority of its uses are in the context of healing the blind and the marginalised.⁸⁹⁵

Because of misunderstandings deriving from their triumphalistic and quasi-political beliefs concerning the role of Messiah, it is understandable that Matthew never uses the title “Son of David” in the context of the healing of large numbers of people except for the record in 21:14f when his ministry reaches its climax. It is probable however that the reference here is to the incongruity expressed in that while the

⁸⁹⁴ 1:1, 6, 17, 20, 21:9, 22:42; 9:27-31; 12:23, 15:22, 20:29ff, 21:15; for discussion concerning Matthew’s use of this term in the context of healing, see Duling, D.C., “Solomon, Exorcism and the Son of David”, *HTR*, 68 (1975) 235-252; “The therapeutic Son of David: An element in Matthew’s Christological Apologetic”, *NTS*, 24. 3 (1978) 393-399; Brady, J., “The Role of Miracle Working as Authentication of Jesus as ‘The Son of God’”, *Churchman*, 103.1 (1989) 34ff; Rogers, C.L.Jr., “The Davidic Covenant in the Gospels”, *BS*, 150 (Oct 1993) 460f; Berger, “Die Koniglichen...”, 1ff. . Duling underestimates the value of the title in a healing context in the first century as contrasted with Berger who argues that the use by the crowds indicates that they recognise Jesus as the Son of David. The Triumphal Entry that follows shows the poverty of their perception of his true mission. Brady (“The Role...”, 35) identifies the term with the alleged supernatural power of Solomon; miraculous powers in Jesus thus fit him to be aptly designated Son of David (Matt. 18:38ff); cf. Fisher, L.R., “Can this be the Son of David?”, *Jesus the Historian*, (ed.) Trotter, F.T., Philadelphia: Westminster (1963) 82ff; Berger, K., “Die Koniglichen Messiastraditionen des Neuen Testaments”, *NTS*, 20 (1973) 3ff, 13ff; Vermes, *Jesus...*, 62ff.

⁸⁹⁵ Kingsbury (J.D., “The title ‘Son of David’ in Matthew’s Gospel”, *JBL*, 95. 4 (1976) 591-602) explores the use of the title, accurately concluding that Matthew uses it in healing contexts for particular purposes, to describe Jesus in the context of those who are blind (9:27-31, 12:22f, 15:21-28, 20:29-34), outcast and marginalised (15:22; 21:14f).

naive children identify Jesus as the Son of David, religious leaders fail to recognise him. Elsewhere, its use is in the context of meeting the needs of those who are deemed unworthy to participate in normal society, and, by logical extension, in the Kingdom of the Messiah. Yet, it is they who “see” the Son of David in Jesus. The Davidic Messiah offers himself to all. While it is the crowds who misunderstand him and the rulers who repudiate him (21:15), it is the blind who “see” him (9:27f; 20:31), the Canaanite who accepts him (15:22) and the infants who applaud him (21:15f). The ability to recognise the Son of David acts as a Matthean marker for an accurate perception of Messiah. Those who make such an identification prove themselves candidates for the Kingdom.

The term “Son of David” is recorded in each of the Synoptics in the healing of blind men (Mark and Luke record only one man) by Jesus.⁸⁹⁶ Despite the rebuke by those present to be quiet, they repeatedly call to Jesus using the title, “Son of David”,⁸⁹⁷ though nowhere else is this located in Mark. Given the limited references to the Son of David as healer in first century or earlier Jewish literature, it is preferable to recognise the term in a wider Christological context (Mk. 12:35-37//s). As far as Matthew is concerned thus far, the title is important in his

⁸⁹⁶ Matt. 20:29-34//Mk. 10:46-52//Lk. 18:35-43.

⁸⁹⁷ Lane (Mark, 387) prefers to view it as a “respectful term of address coloured by the vivid Davidic associations of Jesus”, especially because there is no explicit confirmation of the Messianic status of Jesus and the fact that the blind man refers to Jesus as Master “Rabbouni” (Mark) (Lord (kurios)...Matthew/Luke).

exalted identification of Jesus. Thus, not only is it the first designation applied to Jesus (1:1), but the name of David is regularly mentioned in his genealogy (vs. 6, 17) and the same title is applied to Joseph, the father of Jesus (1:20). Matthew thus describes Jesus as one who has significant status, such that he is called the Son of David with all the hopes and history that the concept presents. Jesus is not just descended from David; he is from Heaven.⁸⁹⁸ It is this that warrants the incorporation of the story at such a crucial point in the narrative, prior to Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem. The blind men see who he truly is while those with physical sight only see him as the Son of David with limited Jewish ramifications.

3. Jesus is also presented in his healing ministry as the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy concerning the new age.⁸⁹⁹ Matthew 8:16f is a record of many people being healed by Jesus, an occurrence viewed by him as the fulfilment of Isaiah 53:4. Petts⁹⁰⁰ writes that the formula quotation is to "be understood in the light of Matthew's overall emphasis on fulfilment" and in particular, "Jesus as the fulfilment of Old Testament hopes". He views the passage and others in Matthew that describe the comprehensive nature of Jesus' healing powers as being meant to

⁸⁹⁸ Matt. 21:23-27; Mk. 11:29-31; Lk. 20:1-8; Jn. 2:18.

⁸⁹⁹ Matt. 8:17 (and his addition to the Markan parallel of 1:32-34 cf Is. 53:4), 11:5, 12:17-21; Lk. 4:18-21; 7:21f; cf. Jeremias, J., "Moses", *TDNT*, (eds.) Kittel, G., Friedrich, G., Grand Rapids:Eerdmans (1964) 4.863; Barnett, P.W., "The Jewish Sign Prophets: 40-70 AD. Their invention and origin", *NTS*, 27 (1981) 682f; Saucy, M., "The Kingdom of God sayings in Matthew", *BS*, 151 (April 1994) 180.

⁹⁰⁰ "Healing...", 110

transmit the central message that "Jesus' kingly authority is such that there is no sickness that he cannot heal".⁹⁰¹

France⁹⁰² notes that although the verse deals with "spiritual deliverance through the Servant's suffering...this did not prevent him (Matthew) noticing that the literal applicability of Is. 53:4 to the healing ministry of Jesus added another dimension to his fulfilment of the mission of God's servant". Matthew does not follow the more spiritualised Septuagintal version of Isaiah 53:4, instead providing a rather loose translation from the Hebrew in order to suit his purposes,⁹⁰³ for the Septuagint presents the verse in terms of the bearing of sins.⁹⁰⁴ In Isaiah, the Servant suffers vicariously, carrying infirmities in himself; in the Gospel, Jesus heals the sick, at times touching them, by removing their disease but without becoming ill.⁹⁰⁵ In Isaiah, the distress seems to be mental or spiritual; in

⁹⁰¹ *ibid*, 110-115; in this, he relies on Gundry, *Matthew*, 148f.

⁹⁰² *Matthew*, 158; cf. Bokovay, W.K., "The Relationship of Physical Healing to the Atonement", *Didaskalia*, 3 (1991) 24-39.

⁹⁰³ Hagner (*Matthew*, 208) suggests that Matthew may have used a source unknown to us or "served as his own targumist" offering his own translation and interpretation; Gundry (*Matthew*, 150) believes that Matthew's literalism captures the force of the Isaianic text especially because "physical well being was thought to be characteristic of the Messianic Age (cf. Is. 29:18; 32:3f; 35:5f)".

⁹⁰⁴ Davies and Allison (*Matthew*, 2.38) explore the meaning of Matthew's presentation of Isaiah 53:4 suggesting that it is possible that "he understood the healing ministry to be a type of Jesus' redemptive suffering" and that "the association between sin and the distasteful reality of disease was so intimate that the healing of sickness could be conceived of as a taking away of sins".

⁹⁰⁵ Patte (*Matthew*, 117) suggests that Matthew may mean "took away" and also "took upon himself", not in the sense of contracting illnesses from people but "uncleanness". Unlike us, for Matthew, sickness "is a dysphoric state brought about by a dysphoric agent, such as uncleanness (a ritual or moral uncleanness) or a sinful condition (a condition of impurity; cf 6:12; 6:14-15; 9:2-8)". However, a major problem with this view is that the text does not refer to uncleanness but to "infirmities and...diseases".

Matthew, physical illnesses are the subject. The removal of the sicknesses from people by Jesus did not take place at the time of the crucifixion⁹⁰⁶ but during his life and ministry when he healed people. It was this healing activity that was the fulfilment of the prophecy of Isaiah.⁹⁰⁷ For Matthew, therefore, Jesus, and in particular, his healing ministry, is presented deliberately as evidence of his fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy and therefore, evidence for his Messianic role.

Thus, also in Matthew 11:4f//Luke 7:21f, Jesus responds to the request of John the Baptist as to his identity by reporting the healings and preaching that represent his ministry. Other than the omission of "and" on three occasions by Matthew and the different tenses used in the instruction of Jesus to tell John the Baptist what the disciples have "seen" and "heard", the statements are identical. In this, Jesus is shown to be reliant on the language of the Old Testament.⁹⁰⁸ Jesus is seeking to encourage John's faith in him and his ministry by placing both his

⁹⁰⁶ Thomas (*The Devil...*, 173) views it as "an anticipation of the Passion".
⁹⁰⁷ cf. Unger, "Divine...", 243; cf. Bruner, *Matthew*, 1.310f; Hagner, *Matthew*, 211; Fee, G., *The Disease of the Health and Wealth Gospels*, Costa Mesa: The Word for Today (1979) 19; Wilkinson, J., "Physical Healing and the Atonement", *EQ*, 63.2 (1991)

149-167; Niehaus, J., "O.T. Foundations: Signs and wonders in Prophetic ministry and the substitutionary Atonement of Is. 53," *The Kingdom...*, 49; Petts, D., "Healing and the Atonement", *EB*, 12 (1993) 28f; Seet, C., "The Doctrine of Healing in the Atonement", *TBB*, 2.2 (July 1996) 96.

⁹⁰⁸ Is. 26:19; 29:18; 35:5f; 42:7, 18; 61:1. Noting that these texts do not refer to the cleansing of lepers, Gundry (*Matthew*, 206) suggests that this "surplus shows that Jesus' deeds exceed the demands of John's question".

healing and preaching in the context of the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy, itself the *raison d'être* for his own vocation.

Richardson specifically refers to Mark 7:31-37; 8:22-26 and 10:46-52 as evidence for his fulfilling Old Testament prophecy, particularly in the context of Isaiah 29:18; 32:3f; 42:7 and Ezekiel 24:27 in which the dumb and blind are spoken of as having their physical ailments healed in the Day of the Lord.⁹⁰⁹ Mark 7:31-37 also offers a basis for recognising in Jesus a fulfilment of the Old Testament Messianic dream. He alone here includes the healing of a deaf man who also has a speech defect. It follows the characteristically Markan pattern of providing a detailed description, the narration of the healing procedure of Jesus being one of the most circumstantial presentations in the Synoptics.⁹¹⁰ However, the fact that the man is described as having a speech impediment is of particular significance. Insofar as the term "impediment in his speech" (*mogilalon*) is rare, only occurring here in the New Testament, though "dumb" (*alalous*) is used of the condition in verse 37, it is likely that Mark has Isaiah 35:5f, its only use in the Septuagint, in mind. There, it refers to the coming of the Lord to bring redemption to his people. Jesus is presented in the context of Isaiah 35:5f as the fulfilment of prophecy concerning the Redeemer sent by God to break the bondage of the people.⁹¹¹ Dowd⁹¹² suggests that Mark presents Jesus

⁹⁰⁹ *The Miracle...*, 82ff, 104.

⁹¹⁰ cf. Cunningham, S., "The Healing of the Deaf and dumb man (Mark 7:31-37)", *AJET*, 9.2 (1990).

⁹¹¹ Isaiah 50:4 refers to the gift of the "tongue" to the Servant in order that he might sustain the weary person. Such an image fits in with the fulfilment motif in

functioning in such a way as to recall the work of God echoed in Genesis 1:31, in that "he has done all things well". That the incident takes place in the Decapolis suggests that Jesus is again indicating that the Kingdom of God is open to Gentiles also, especially since it follows the narrative concerning the Syrophoenician woman who has her need met by Jesus. She was not unique; other Gentiles are offered the blessings of the Kingdom. The healing of the man, resulting in the restoration of the ability to speak clearly, acts as a symbol of the ministry of Jesus. Those who respond to his teaching, their spiritual deafness having been removed, are able to speak the good news of the Kingdom to others.

The account recorded by Luke (7:11-17) concerning the resurrection of the widow of Nain's son precedes the story of John the Baptist's disciples coming to Jesus. The restoration also provides further evidence to support the fulfilment of prophecy in the life of Jesus. The purpose for this miracle is mainly to evidence the status of Jesus as one who has come as the representative of God;⁹¹³ thus, he fulfils the expected role of Messiah. After the miracle occurs, the people refer to Jesus as a great prophet, reminiscent of Deuteronomy 18:15 (LXX), and, more significantly, comment on the fact that "God has visited His

Mark.

⁹¹² Dowd, S.E., Prayer, Power and the Problem of Suffering, Atlanta: Scholars Press (1988) 116.

⁹¹³ contra Kaye, B.N., The Supernatural in the New Testament, London: Lutterworth Press (1977) 26.

people". Jesus is described as being a great prophet, perhaps in reminiscence of Elijah and the resurrection performed by him, given the identical nature of the words in verse 15 to 1 Kings 17:23,⁹¹⁴ though it is conceivable that Elisha is also in the mind of the writer given the proximity of Nain to Shunem where Elisha's miracle of resurrection had taken place. What is clear, however, is that Jesus' miracle evidences him as a superior prophet to the heroes of the Old Testament though in the line of Old Testament prophetic revelation and ministry.

4. In the Old Testament, the connection between sickness and sin is regularly pronounced.⁹¹⁵ Jesus uniquely presents a new era in which he offers release from bondage, both physical and spiritual, that is unheard of to the Jews. Of significance to this thesis is the fact that nowhere does Jesus suggest that a person should confess any sins before they are physically healed. Where there is a possible relationship between sin and suffering, Jesus does not request (or receive) a confession or act of repentance. Indeed, on occasions, he unilaterally declares forgiveness. This does not mean, as Koop⁹¹⁶ suggests that, "there is no connection between specific sin and the judgement of God in the sense of retributive judgement". Rather, it illustrates the authority of Jesus who forgives any sin and provides healing simultaneously. This indiscriminate amnesty makes him and his ministry unique. It functions

⁹¹⁴ cf. Nolland, Luke, 1.322; Latourelle, The Miracles..., 189f.

⁹¹⁵ Ex. 32:35; Lev. 10:1f; Num. 11:1ff; 14:3f; Deut. 32:39.

⁹¹⁶ Koop, C.E., "Faith Healing and the Sovereignty of God", The Agony of Deceit, (ed.) Horton, M., Chicago:Moody (1990) 177.

as proof of the establishing of the eschatological freedom described in his Nazareth sermon. To emulate this is an impossibility. This is in contrast to the guidelines laid down in James 5 and the advice of Paul in which he recognises that sin can lead to physical weakness (1 Cor. 11:30 cf. Acts 5:1ff).

The healings are thus to be located in the contextual framework of teaching that confirms issues of importance concerning the person and activity of Jesus. They validate his claims about himself and identify him as the appropriate and authoritative initiator of the Kingdom. Insofar as a major element in Jesus' mission of healing was to initiate the Kingdom, it is difficult to see how believers may emulate it, since his role was unique and therefore, by definition, unrepeatable. Healings may still be achieved but not with the same purpose as when achieved by Jesus.

Opportunities for belief

(See also Matthew 9:1-8//s, 9:32-34, 12:15-21, 12:22-29//s, 12:43-45//s, 21:14; Luke 13:10-17; John 5:2-47)

The Jews were clearly interested in issues related to health⁹¹⁷ but Jesus' concern goes beyond this. Bosch⁹¹⁸ notes that for Jesus, the healings result in

⁹¹⁷ cf. Newmyer, S., "Climate and Health: Classical and Talmudic Perspective", Judaism, 33.4 (1984) 426-438.

⁹¹⁸ Bosch, D.J., "Mission in Jesus' Way: A Perspective from Luke's Gospel", Missionalia, 17.1 (1989) 16.

liberation from bondage leading to salvation. They reflect the Incarnation which is itself the paradigm for God's action in the World.

The healings of Jesus provided many opportunities for people to consider him and his claims. They functioned as important catalysts for faith or rejection. Thus, Kee⁹¹⁹ comments, "The healing works of Jesus are means to spiritual transformation rather than ends in themselves". Although Held⁹²⁰ rightly states that they were "not intended as a means for converting the unbeliever," healings did provide people with the opportunity to accept Jesus. This aspect is recorded in all the Gospels⁹²¹ and also in the writings of the Early Church.⁹²² The miracles of Jesus did not always lead to expressions of faith;⁹²³ on some occasions, the healing was achieved after an expression of faith had been perceived by Jesus.⁹²⁴ However, they were valuable signposts leading to the potential of faith in Jesus in a more developed way than simply to recognise in him a therapeutic agency of significant power. This issue will now be explored through the Gospels.

⁹¹⁹ Kee, Medicine..., 126; McCaughey (T., "Paradigms of Faith in the Gospel of St. Luke", ITQ, 45 (1978) 181f) over enthusiastically and with limited evidence argues that saving faith was often developed on the basis of faith for a cure.

⁹²⁰ "Matthew...", 277; Bailey, Divine..., 187.

⁹²¹ Matt. 9:8; 11:20-24; 15:31; Mk. 1:45; 2:2; 3:7f; 5:19f; 6:13; 7:25; 10:52; Lk. 5:8-11, 10:13-15; 17:15f; 18:43; 19:37f; Jn. 2:11; 4:53; 5:43; 6:14; 9:38; 11:15, 45 (Acts 8:9-11; 9:35, 42; 13:12; 1 Cor. 2:4)

⁹²² Justin, Dial. Trypho, 69; Irenaeus, Adv. Haer., 2.32.4; 5.11.2; Origen, Contra Celsum, 1.46; 2.52

⁹²³ Matt. 11:20-24; 12:9-14, 24; 13:53-58; 21:14; Jn. 6:26; 7:5; 10:37f; 12:10f, 37, 43; 14:11; cf. Igenoza, A.O., "Medicine and Healing in African Christianity: A Biblical critique", AER, 30.1 (1988) 23; Carroll, "Sickness...", 132; Heil ("Significant...", 283-285) views them as ultimately causing his death.

⁹²⁴ Matt. 8:13; 9:22, 29; Mk. 5:28-34; 6:1-6; Lk. 17:19; 18:42; Jn. 4:50; Acts 3:16; 14:9.

Each of the Synoptists record the healing of the man with the withered hand.⁹²⁵ Although there are stylistic differences and distinctions in these narratives, the fundamental similarities involve the condition and healing of the man, the confrontation with the Pharisees and the resulting discussion by the opposition concerning their plans for Jesus. The break with the religious establishment is now apparent, at least in this geographical area. The significant purpose for this account being recorded is not the healing itself but the testimony to Jesus that results from it. None of the Synoptists record that the man requested healing. Based upon the healing, however, those present are requested to decide how they will view Jesus, the particular issue relating to his authority over Rabbinic laws concerning the Sabbath.⁹²⁶ The religious leaders decide to reject him; others decide to follow him. It is in this context that Mark and Luke record Jesus inviting the man who needs healing to stand next to him (in contrast to other occasions when Jesus has called for privacy⁹²⁷), followed by the non-rhetorical question to the onlookers which is greeted with silence and their distancing themselves from him.

At the same time, the spontaneous decision of Jesus to heal someone who is suffering is contrasted with the immediate reaction of the Pharisees to discuss their response, Matthew and Mark recording that it involved a desire to destroy

⁹²⁵ Matt. 12:9-14; Mk. 3:1-6; Lk. 6:6-11; Luke records it is the man's right hand; Mark alone records the anger expressed by Jesus.

⁹²⁶ M. Yoma 8.6 allows for the possibility of medical help on the Sabbath but only if the person concerned is in danger of losing his/her life; Koch (D.A., Die Bedeutung der Wundererzahlungen für die Christologie des Markusevangeliums. Berlin:der Gruyter (1976) 50-55) concludes that it is the demonstration of this authority that is the central focus of Luke's presentation.

⁹²⁷ Matt. 9:24f //s; Mk. 7:33; 8:23.

him. Although Mark and Luke present the Pharisees in a passive mode waiting to see if they can gain an opportunity to accuse him, Matthew records them insidiously provoking a possible confrontation so that they could accuse him. Nevertheless, Luke explicitly and Mark, by implication, note that Jesus was aware of their scheming and responded to their unspoken thoughts. The man thus functions as an object lesson, not only providing them with a reason to place their faith in Jesus, the healing making that decision easier but also identifying their crime in rejecting him as more heinous and senseless. Compassion is allied to the fulfilment of God's will; hatred linked with adherence to man made laws. Jesus, the one rejected, exhibits the former while the religious opposition reveal the latter.

If, as Derrett claims, there is a deliberate connection with Isaiah 56:2-5, Jesus' healing may be understood as providing the restored man with entrance to the synagogue as a full member.⁹²⁸ Even if the link is unproven, the healing of the man would have brought about such a reintegration, itself fulfilling the mission of Jesus to restore people to God and their social constituency with integrity.

⁹²⁸ Derrett, J.D.M., "Christ and the Power of Choice (Mark 3:1-6), *Biblica*, 65. 2 (1984) 173f; however, although the linkwords, "hand" and possibly "dry" are located in Is. 56:2f, the implied connection is tortuous. No healing takes place in the Isaianic passage; the metaphor, that includes "hand", indicates an ethical lifestyle and the word "dry" is associated with a tree, not a hand, being illustrative of poverty and powerlessness. If the link is clear to Mark's readers, the culpability of the religious opposition is emphasised. Derrett develops his theme (175-178) by deducing that Mark is providing a midrash on Deuteronomy 30:15-19. The very ingenuity of the suggestion is its greatest obstacle; however, his basic premise stands, that Jesus is offering a choice to those present concerning their attitude to himself.

The opportunity for people to express their faith in Jesus on the basis of miracles is also noted in the healing of the blind men (Matt. 20:29-34; Mk. 10:46-52; Lk. 18:35-43; the latter two record the story only referring to one blind man). The question of Jesus to the blind men is earlier recorded being asked of the mother of James and John (Matt. 20:21). However, a contrast is to be drawn between the misunderstanding of the latter and the accurate response of the blind men to the same question.⁹²⁹ In the Markan narrative, the contrast is more graphically presented and the quality of the spiritual perception of the blind man more transparently developed. Mark (10:36-38) reveals James and John, presumptuously demanding a response from Jesus, their request being inappropriate based on their ignorance of the mission of their leader. Thus, faith, appropriate to a disciple, is exemplified in the blind beggar but contrasted with the misguided perception of two of the Twelve who although they physically saw Jesus were blinkered in their knowledge of his mission. Accurate insight is again demonstrated by a blind man.

On one level, this is a demonstration of physical healing made possible as a result of simple trust in Jesus to achieve the restoration.⁹³⁰ At the same time, it provides the possibility for a deeper encounter with Jesus that will result in a spiritual as well as a physical restoration for it has the potential of leading to a

⁹²⁹ Robbins, V.K., "The healing of Blind Bartimaeus (10:46-52) in the Marcan theology", *JBL*, 92. 72 (1973) 226.

⁹³⁰ In the similar account in Matthew 9:27-31, Jesus simply asks blind men if they believe he is able to heal them. The faith he requires is simply to believe that he can heal, not that he will (see also 8:2). Quality, not quantity, is of significance, the phrase, "according to your faith", referring to the fact that their healing has been granted in response to their faith rather than in proportion to it.

more complete perception of the person of Jesus. Thus, Richardson⁹³¹ describes it not as faith in a healer but "*Christian* faith, or *saving* faith (verse 52)" though it is to be remembered that healing miracles do not guarantee that the potential for such faith will be realised automatically.

The use of the term "Son of David", by the blind man, does indicate faith appropriate for a disciple and it is accurate to deduce that for each author such faith has the potential not just for a correct perception of the person of Jesus but also of active pursuit, revealed in a readiness to follow him.⁹³² Indeed, while others (v. 39) are blind to the mission of Jesus to the poor and blind, the sightless comprehend Jesus' agenda accurately as being to those on the perimeter of society. Their confidence in this allows them to call out to Jesus for help.

Matthew follows this story with Jesus' painful entry into Jerusalem, whilst he introduces it with teaching concerning the importance of service for would-be followers of Jesus. Thus, for him also, the healing serves as a bridge between two events central to which is service, which is itself exemplified in the life of the man who has been healed by Jesus. The motif, earlier discussed, of the catalytic function of the healings of Jesus providing the possibility of belief and commitment in Jesus is again demonstrated. This story powerfully

⁹³¹ The Miracle..., 89; cf. Schweizer, The Good News..., 224f; Burkill, T.A., Mysterious Revelation, Ithaca: Cornell University (1963) 185ff.

⁹³² cf. Weeden, Mark..., 59-64; see further Paul, A., "La guérison de l'aveugle (des aveugles) de Jericho", FV, 69.3 (1970) 44-69, esp. 55-59; Meynet, R., "Au coeur du texte: analyse rhétorique de l'aveugle de Jericho selon saint Luc", NRT, 103 (1981) 696-710.

functions as the last healing miracle before Gethsemane, taking place about twelve miles away. It also serves as an example to others to place their commitment completely in Jesus as did the restored man.⁹³³

Mark introduces the story with teaching thematically related to the suffering awaiting potential followers of Jesus whilst concluding (10:52) with the information that the man follows Jesus to Jerusalem, the place of his destiny and death. The faith expressed by the man is thus couched between two narratives that clarify the identity of faith in Jesus...faith that is willing to follow as would a disciple his master, irrespective of the cost.⁹³⁴

That Luke immediately precedes this narrative with the account of the rich young ruler (18:18-23) and follows it with the story of Zaacheus who climbed a tree to "see" Jesus (19:3f) is no accident. The law abiding ruler recognised (saw) Jesus as a teacher but rejected his teaching; the sinner Zaacheus recognised (saw) Jesus as his Saviour and accepted his invitation for fellowship; the crowd who saw what had happened to Zaacheus (19:7) misunderstood Jesus' mission. While the blind beggar is reflected in Zaacheus, in that both recognise (see) their Saviour, the crowd is reflected in the ruler (18:18-23) who chooses to keep that which Zaacheus chose to give

⁹³³ cf. Johnson, E.S., "Mark 10:46-52: Blind Bartimaeus", CBQ, 40. 2 (1978) 191-204; Dupont, J., "Blind Bartimaeus (Mk. 10:46-52)", TD, 33. 2 (1986) 223-228.

⁹³⁴ cf. Carrington, P., According to Mark, Cambridge: CUP (1960) vii; Hahn, F., Mission in the New Testament, London: SCM (1965) 12ff; Achtemeier, P.J., "'And he followed him': Miracles and Discipleship in Mark 10:46-52", Semeia, 11 (1978) 115-145.

away. The blindness thus acts as a metaphor for spiritual blindness, as it has done elsewhere in the Gospels.⁹³⁵

The faith which leads to sight being restored is available to all and the story of the healing of the blind man exalts the identity of this faith to a personal faith in Jesus rather than in his power to work miracles only. Thus, Luke also (18:43) concludes the healing narrative with a description of the restored man following Jesus to Jerusalem. The motif of discipleship and consequent suffering to be expected in the life of the disciple, presented in Luke (18:29f) is objectivised in the life of the beggar. It is significant to note that each of the Synoptists follow this pericope with the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem though Luke first includes the story of Zaacheus' salvation and the parable of the Ten Pounds in which true citizenship is explained. The potential for faith is for all though it is not clear how many express it truly when Jesus enters Jerusalem. But for each writer, the healing of the blind man indicates the potential for true revelation available to all.

Both the crowds and the blind man welcome Jesus as a Davidic figure but whereas the former misunderstand his purpose and mission, the latter recognises his status; the former eventually reject him, resulting in the loss of

⁹³⁵ Lk. 4:18 (Is. 61:1f) where it is centrally located; see also a development of this theme in Luke by Hamm, M.D., "Sight to the Blind: Vision as metaphor in Luke", *Biblica*, 67 (1986) 457-477; Pilch ("Sickness...", 24) notes that in Luke-Acts, blindness/sight suggests a spiritual/symbolic stress (4:18; 6:39-42; 7:21; 8:1-15; 10:21-24; 11:29-36; 12:54-56; 17:22-33; 23:8, 48; Acts 28:23-31) leading him to conclude that, "for Luke, blindness refers especially to refusal to see and understand".

potential benefits while the latter correctly perceives his identity and is integrated into his entourage.⁹³⁶ The Jewish people located in Jerusalem, the heart of Judaism, misunderstand him; the blind outcast recognises him.⁹³⁷ It is no surprise that Jesus later castigates the religious leaders for their blindness.⁹³⁸

In Luke 14:1-6, the healing of a man with dropsy is uniquely recorded. The purpose and context of this miracle is similar to that recorded in 13:10-17. Both take place on the Sabbath. Both involve the healing of a non-life-threatening illness by Jesus. Both record the presence of a ruler, on this occasion, a Pharisee. Both result in a statement by Jesus referring to their action to animals on the Sabbath and both include the inability of his adversaries to prove him wrong or justify their own position. The man concerned does not request healing, neither is there a reference to faith; indeed, the healing is barely mentioned. The purpose of the narrative is again to record the attitude of the religious people to someone in need when it conflicts with their interpretation of the Law, whilst at the same time offering an opportunity for a development in commitment to Jesus.

⁹³⁶ Gibbs (J.M., "Purpose and Pattern in Matthew's Use of the title 'Son of David'", NTS, 10 (1963-1964) 446-464) argues that Matthew intends the reader to perceive in the crowd's reception of Jesus a recognition of his being the royal messianic Son of David; Suhl (A., "Der Davidsson im Matthaeus-Evangelium", ZNTW, 59 (1968) 57-81) more accurately emphasises the inadequacy of their response to Jesus.

⁹³⁷ cf. Strecker, G., Der Weg der Gerechtigkeit, Gottingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht (1973) 118-120; Kingsbury, J.D., Matthew: Structure, Christology, Kingdom, Philadelphia: Fortress (1975) 99-103; Loader, "Son...", 575f.

⁹³⁸ Mt. 23:16, 17, 19, 24, 26; Mk. 12:35ff; Lk. 20:41ff.

The illustration Jesus offers in the narrative is particularly apposite since it reflects their willingness to rescue an animal from a surfeit of water in a well while they refuse to allow the same possibility to a man who is suffering from an accumulation of fluid in the tissues. They countenance the saving of an animal from drowning externally but they disallow the salvation of a colleague who is drowning internally.

Jesus, in the context of their silence, performs the miracle authoritatively, without asking for or receiving their permission, and confronts them with the hypocrisy of their practice of interpreting their law. However, more importantly, this miracle is to be understood as a means whereby Jesus is established as doing the work of God (4:18) and, most appropriately on the Sabbath, of delivering people to freedom (v. 4) while the religious establishment, paralysed by inability, is forced to shelter behind Sabbath legislation for it is not equipped to do it. The opportunity to put their faith in the one who does good on the Sabbath is again presented but rejected by those who, in eating with Jesus, are provided with the opportunity of participating in the eschatological banquet of the Messiah if they but recognise that he is with them. Luke presents them not uttering a word to Jesus; it is as if he was not there. The opportunity to develop their faith in Jesus has not been taken.

Luke (17:11-19) uniquely records an occasion when Jesus is met by ten lepers who, from a distance, ask for mercy, referring to him as Jesus and Master.⁹³⁹

⁹³⁹ For a literary analysis of the passage, see Betz, H.D., "The cleansing of the ten lepers (Luke 17:11-19)", *JBL*, 90 (1971) 314-328.

He appears not to deal with their problem, instead instructing them to show themselves to the priests. Luke defines their being healed while on the way though he does not specify when this occurred. Although the healing is remarkable, the purpose of the narrative is again not located in the healing but in the response to Jesus of those who had been healed. The one who returned to give thanks is identified as a Samaritan.

However, this narrative is not a lesson in gratitude.⁹⁴⁰ It is another presentation of the importance of an accurate perception of the person of Jesus and its consequences. Whereas the nine understand Jesus to be a miracle worker, in whom they chose to place their confidence, the Samaritan is presented by Luke as benefiting from a fuller revelation of Jesus. Because of his faith, he receives salvation of which the cleansing from leprosy is but a physical symbol. Although it is not denied that all were physically cured, the Samaritan when he "saw that he was healed" perceived a greater healing was at stake. His return to Jesus is to be understood as being indicative of his positive qualitative assessment of the one who had wrought his healing. While he "comprehends the significance of the miracle...the others appear to have taken their miracle as no more than a lucky coincidence".⁹⁴¹ This one person, uniquely described in the New Testament as "a foreigner", behaves as a true disciple of God's family, recognising the person of Jesus. Luke informs the readers that he returns to Jesus, twice describing him as praising God, also giving thanks to Jesus and falling on his face. These three actions are

⁹⁴⁰ contra Latourelle, *The Miracles...*, 200.

⁹⁴¹ Betz, "The cleansing...", 326.

indicative of the fact that the leper not only recognised that he had been healed, but also the central position of Jesus to that act. Thus, he (temporarily) disobeys Jesus' command to go to the priest in order to honour him as the Lord. Although he could have praised God without going to Jesus, Luke records that he chooses to do both for he recognises in Jesus the divine presence. Indeed, the affirmation of the leper's praise to God by Jesus is confirmation that his perception is accurate.

Although all were cleansed from their leprosy, only one took advantage of the opportunity afforded to perceive the true identity of the one who had performed the healing.⁹⁴² As a result of this expression of faith, Luke records that he was made well (σωζω). While they were all cleansed (καθαρίζω...17:14, 17), only he, who recognised that he had been physically healed (ἰαομαι...17:15), was made whole (σωζω...17:19). This variation in words is unlikely to be accidental; Luke desires the reader to recognise that the final words of Jesus refer to more than the man being cleansed of leprosy, since that was the experience of the nine also, their cleansing being achieved on the basis of their willingness to obey Jesus. Although "σωζω" (I save/heal) is used by the Synoptists,⁹⁴³ including Luke,⁹⁴⁴ to describe physical healing, on this occasion, it more likely refers to a

⁹⁴² Talbert (Reading..., 165) draws a parallel with the healing of Naaman, the leper (2 Kings 5) who is healed but also returns to Elisha, confessing his faith in the God of Israel.

⁹⁴³ egs. Matt. 9:22; Mk. 5:34; 6:56.

⁹⁴⁴ 8:48.

spiritual transformation⁹⁴⁵ and thus provides a fitting culmination to the passage.⁹⁴⁶

The previous pericope concludes with the assessment that gratitude of the master for the slave who obeys him is inappropriate for obedience is the duty of the slave. The scenario of servant to master is now played out in the meeting of the leper with Jesus, whom he has previously described as "Master". However, in the meeting and the expression of gratitude, which the reader recognises is only natural given the transformation in the life of the leper, Jesus is seen to respond positively to the action of the man that is to be understood as his duty, encouraging him to rise, offering him the opportunity to go his way with no restrictions or responsibilities placed upon him and remarking that his faith has made him whole. The healing has been a catalyst that has led to a spiritual transformation by Jesus. He gives thanks as a new member of the family, not as a foreign slave.

This follows four instructions to the disciples regarding discipleship; warnings against causing another to stumble (17:1f); the importance of forgiveness (17:3f); the importance of faith (17:5f) and; lessons concerning obedience (17:7-10). The leper, by his response, demonstrates that he has begun the life of a disciple by already fulfilling some of the above.

⁹⁴⁵ Mk. 8:35; Lk. 19:9f; Acts 4:12; Rom. 5:9; 1 Cor. 1:18.

⁹⁴⁶ In the earlier passages concerning the cleansing of the leper recorded in each of the Synoptics, "καθαρίζω" is the only word used to describe the curative process.

The narrative that follows is also significant in that it records Luke informing the Pharisees that rather than look for the Kingdom, they should recognise that it is "in the midst of you" (17:21), a reference to himself. The parallel is obvious; although the ten lepers were recipients of the ministry of Jesus, only one, and he, a Samaritan who was not part of the community intended to receive the ministry of Jesus, actually recognised his significance and benefited from that revelation. That they refuse to place their faith in the one who is in their midst demonstrates that the Pharisees are less perceptive than a Samaritan. He is the first of a list of those on the margins who accurately respond to the Kingdom (a widow (18:1ff), a tax collector (18:9ff), children (18:15ff) and a sinner (19:1ff)). The aftermath of the healings are of particular interest to Luke and offer opportunities for him to reveal the opposition to Jesus⁹⁴⁷ and the reactions of praise to God.⁹⁴⁸ They provide evidence that the Kingdom is present and demands a response. For Luke, healing miracles point the way to God and serve as stepping stones to faith.⁹⁴⁹

John also views healings as valid signs that help to establish truth and point towards faith.⁹⁵⁰ For John, they are always public events achieved in the context of unbelievers, all identified as "signs" and each reveals Jesus as the

⁹⁴⁷ 6:11; 13:14.

⁹⁴⁸ 5:26; 7:16; 8:35, 37, 43; 9:43; 13:17; 17:16; 18:37, 43.

⁹⁴⁹ 5:1; 6:6; 13:10; cf. Green, "Jesus...", 645; Achtemeier, P.J., "The Lucan Perspective on the Miracles of Jesus: A Preliminary Sketch", Perspectives on Luke Acts, (ed.) Talbert, C.H., Danville:ABPR (1978) 550ff; Brown, C., Miracles and the Critical Mind, Exeter:Paternoster Press (1984) 318.

⁹⁵⁰ cf. Johns, L.L., Miller, D.B., "The Signs as Witnesses in the Fourth Gospel: Re-examining the evidence", CBQ, 56.3 (1994) 519-535; Wilkinson, "Healing...", 454-456.

authentic delegate of God.⁹⁵¹ John 10:38, 14:11 reveal that one of the purposes of signs is to provide an opportunity for faith and although Jesus, in 20:29,31, may exalt the faith of those who believe without the support of signs, he does not condemn signs as an illegitimate or artificial means of encouraging faith. Indeed, 20:30 notes that Jesus performed many signs while 20:31 states that those recorded by John are specifically included to enable the readers to know that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.⁹⁵² In the healings of Jesus, recorded in his gospel, they function as signposts to a more developed appreciation of the person of Jesus. Although initially, the person concerned may view Jesus as a healer, the miracle provides an opportunity to recognise that he is the Saviour also.⁹⁵³

Healing, as one example of a sign is, for John, an incomplete act unless it leads to a development of faith in the one restored or the onlookers. In that respect, the "significance" of the act is realised.⁹⁵⁴ He records the healing of the dying son of a royal official (4:46-54). The request of the official is met with an apparently negative statement by Jesus concerning the unwillingness of the man to believe unless he sees signs and wonders, even though there has been no prior indication of this on his part.⁹⁵⁵ It is possible therefore that the

⁹⁵¹ cf. Kostenberger, A.J., The Missions of Jesus and the Disciples according to the Fourth Gospel, Grand Rapids:Eerdmans (1998) 60ff.

⁹⁵² cf. Neyrey, J.H., "'My Lord and my God': The Divinity of Jesus in John's Gospel", SBL Seminar Papers, (1986) 152-171.

⁹⁵³ cf. Thompson, M., "Signs and faith in the Fourth Gospel", BBR, 1 (1991) 89-106, esp. 93f.

⁹⁵⁴ see Kostenberger (The Missions..., 62f) for an important development of this issue, distancing "sign" from "miracle", describing the former as a symbolic action.

⁹⁵⁵ Morris (John, 290) points to the double negative (v. 49) as evidence of

words of Jesus are to the wider audience of sceptics.⁹⁵⁶ Lindars⁹⁵⁷ suggests that Jesus is testing the faith of the man though the text does not commend itself to this view for not only is such a possibility unmentioned by the narrative, but if this is the case, the man appears to ignore it.

The identity of the belief (v. 48) referred to by Jesus is unclear. Bultmann⁹⁵⁸ comments that it is to be equated with a recognition of "his need for help. This is enough for his request to be granted". However, Jesus is not referring to a belief in his healing power for the man has already expressed his faith in that, evidenced by his request that Jesus come and heal his son. Rather, John is indicating belief in the superior person of Jesus, possibly as the Son of God (20:31). This is confirmed by the fact that when the man returned home and found his son restored, he and his household believed (4:53). It appears that the fact that the healing took place instantaneously confirmed to the father that Jesus was worthy of his faith. Since this faith cannot refer to belief in the healing power of Jesus, for John records that he returned home believing the promise of Jesus that the boy would be restored, it must describe a different belief, faith in the superior person of Jesus.⁹⁵⁹

unwillingness.

⁹⁵⁶ cf. Stibbe, John, 72; Brown (John, 1. 191) believes Jesus views the man as representing the Galileans of verses 44f.

⁹⁵⁷ John, 203; cf. Milne, John, 91.

⁹⁵⁸ John, 208.

⁹⁵⁹ contra Van der Loos, The Miracles..., 548f; Schnackenburg (John 1, (1968) 468) questions the quality of the faith of the man who believes only after the healing, though this does not reflect accurately the growing faith of the man before the healing.

The miracle, as crafted by John, reveals a man encouraged to believe in Jesus in a more comprehensive way than simply to acknowledge that he has healing powers. Thus, although initially, he seeks Jesus because he believes he has an ability to heal, by the close of the narrative, he is ready to acknowledge Jesus at a deeper level.⁹⁶⁰ The statement by Jesus in verse 48 possibly reflects an accurate assessment of the unwillingness of the man to exert complete faith in Jesus.⁹⁶¹ However, it more likely indicates the perception of Jesus that signs and wonders are a valid way of encouraging faith in him,⁹⁶² this being proved by the fact that as a result of seeing the miracle, the man believes in Jesus, this developing to a matured faith in Christ. The faith of the man concerning Jesus' power to heal is not in doubt, though it is true that his faith in Jesus as the Son of God does not develop until after the healing.⁹⁶³ Rather than describe his initial faith, as described in verse 50, as weak,⁹⁶⁴ it would be more accurate to describe it as faith directed to the therapeutic agency of Jesus only. Jesus' comment to the official, the plural relating the statement to others also, is a perceptive comment on the value of signs to the encouragement of faith.

The healing is presented by John therefore as a sign resulting in the man placing his faith in the person of Jesus, the validity of signs to the development

⁹⁶⁰ cf. Witherington, John's..., 127; Carson, John, 238.

⁹⁶¹ Brown (John, 1.191) states, "in Johannine thought, an overemphasis on the wondrous blinds the eye to the miracle's ability to reveal who Jesus is"; Similarly, Barrett (John, 247) describes it as inadequate; cf. Carson, John, 238f.

⁹⁶² cf. Bultmann, John, 207; Stenger, W., New Testament Exegesis, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans (1993) 116.

⁹⁶³ cf. Lk. 17:11-19.

⁹⁶⁴ cf. Morris, L. The Gospel according to John, London:MMS (1972) 288.

of faith being confirmed. Rather than the healing be understood as the focus of the narrative, it is the centrality of faith that must receive our attention. The faith in the healing power of Jesus preceding the miracle is the springboard for potential faith in the person of Jesus, the climax of the narrative indicating the achievement of the latter.

It is significant to note that John records this story after mentioning the fact that Samaritans also believed in Jesus, faith resulting from the testimony of a woman to the supernatural knowledge of Jesus concerning her life, though that faith also saw a development after the Samaritans had heard Jesus himself (4:39, 41). Thus, again, a sign had been a valid part of the process of leading individuals to absolute faith in Jesus. Following this account and preceding the narrative concerning the healing of the official's son is a reference to the fact that the Galileans also welcomed him because of his activities in Jerusalem (v. 45). The latter signs do not inevitably lead to faith, but they are not illegitimate elements in the process and they are potentially positive.

The healing of a blind man is described in John 9:1-41. John records this account after an extended discussion between Jesus and others concerning his identification (8:31-59), resulting in his opponents claiming that he has a demon because of his claims concerning himself, concluding with their attempt to murder him. This theme of confrontation will be continued, but this time between the Pharisees and the one who has been restored by Jesus (9:13-34). John incorporates the healing of the blind man who has his sight restored as a

bridge between the former conflict and the latter. It results in Jesus' condemnation of his opponents as being spiritually blind (vs. 35-40) after they have rejected the validity of the healing of the blind man as a witness to his person and mission. Indeed, they also choose to reject the validity of the man's own testimony relating to the logical implications concerning Jesus to be drawn from his healing (vs. 30-33), their emphatic statement, "we know that this man is a sinner" (v. 24) indicating their set position.⁹⁶⁵

The significance of the inclusion of this healing by John again focuses on its significance as a sign (v. 16). Here, it is specifically to determine the authority of Jesus (vs. 25, 31-33) as the Light of the World (8:12; 9:5),⁹⁶⁶ given the startling nature of this definition to the Jews who were used to this description being exclusively related to Jehovah.⁹⁶⁷ In 12:35f, the motifs of light and darkness are again presented when Jesus encourages the people to walk in the light lest darkness overtake them. The miracle of sight is thus part of the theological message of John. In the Old Testament, restoration of sight is associated with the action of God⁹⁶⁸ or his delegate.⁹⁶⁹ It is therefore no surprise that throughout the narrative, reflections on the person of Jesus appear, the ability to achieve restoration of sight indicating that Jesus is from God.⁹⁷⁰ It is significant to note that no restoration of blindness by a human

⁹⁶⁵ "hemeis oidamen" ...emphatic use of the personal pronoun.

⁹⁶⁶ Comfort, *Opening...*, 151.

⁹⁶⁷ cf. Torrance, T., "The Giving of sight to the man born blind", *EQ*, 9.1 (1937) 75.

⁹⁶⁸ Ex. 4:11; Ps. 146:8.

⁹⁶⁹ Is. 29:18; 35:5; 42:7.

⁹⁷⁰ cf. Brown (Brown, *The Gospel...*, 1. 378; Hamm ("Sight...", 457ff) views this as a picture of the spiritually blind having their eyes opened...an event anticipated in the Messianic reign (Is. 29:28; 35:5; 42:7); Derrett (Derrett, J.D.M., "John 9:6

being is recorded in the Old Testament nor by the Disciples while such healings are recorded as having been performed by Jesus more than all others.

As far as the narrative is concerned, the man is near the Temple (8:59-9:1) but proximity to the most sacred place provides no potential for restoration; it is proximity to Jesus that matters. That he was born blind is indicative of his being there (intermittently) for a long period, but healing is not effected during that time; it only occurs when Jesus "passed by". The duration also emphasises the seriousness of his condition; nowhere else in the Gospels is there a similar physical defect recorded. The amazing nature of the healing is thus accentuated in the light of these other features.⁹⁷¹

The man does not request healing, neither does he express faith in Jesus' power to heal or in Jesus' person. This is a less substantial form of dependency on Jesus than that of the royal official recorded in the previous story. However, the story teller will explain the validity of the healing in the process of leading a person to a more complete faith in the person of Jesus. His faith in Jesus is expressed after the sign has been performed; the healing initially only results in his affirming that Jesus is a prophet (v. 17). It will

read with Isaiah 6:10; 20:9", *EQ*, 66. 3 (1994) 251-254) suggests that John was reflecting Isaiah 6:10 and thus recording that the prophecy of Isaiah was being fulfilled in the ministry of Jesus. Irony permeates the narrative: the blind see and those with physical sight are blind.

⁹⁷¹ cf. Painter, J., "John 9 and Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel", *JSNT*, 28 (1986) 35.

however develop to a recognition of Jesus as one sent from God (v. 33) and finally that he is the Son of Man and Lord (vs. 37f).

His witness to Jesus is true (vs. 10, 15, 26, 30) while the Pharisees are inadequate witnesses (v. 18). The Pharisees affirm Jesus is a sinner (v. 24) and that he is not from God (v. 16) though others question this latter analysis (v. 16). The parents are more fearful of the Jews than they are of Jesus (v. 22). However, the man worships⁹⁷² him (v. 35-37), thus acknowledging his status as God.⁹⁷³ His faith has developed to the point where he now acknowledges Jesus as "the eschatological bringer of salvation".⁹⁷⁴

At the same time, Jesus finds and speaks to him; one who has been cast out by the religious establishment (vs. 35ff) while he confirms as guilty and blind those who have rejected the sign that he provided for them. The gradual development of the understanding and faith of the healed man is not to be understood negatively but as contrasted to the developing obduracy of those who refuse to understand and believe.⁹⁷⁵ The quality of light is that it provides brightness for the blind but allows shadows to exist for the charlatans. The signs of Jesus are valid as pointers to the truth, the rejection of them and their source being sufficient for condemnation. The Jews receive light for their

⁹⁷² Bultmann (John, 339) argues that this term "denotes not the homage and reverence accorded to a man, nor even that given to the miracle worker, but that paid to the 'Son of Man' as a divine figure"; cf. Milne, John, 143.

⁹⁷³ cf. Morris, John, 496; Tenney, "Topics...", 150.

⁹⁷⁴ Bultmann, John, 338; Stibbe (John, 106f) also stresses the developmental nature of the man's faith in Jesus.

⁹⁷⁵ cf. Brown, John, 1. 377.

darkness; that they reject it leaves them in darkness which now results in their judgement (v. 39). Bligh⁹⁷⁶ notes, "the blind man justifies Christ and is justified; the others condemn him...and are condemned".

Thus, while the healing transforms the man physically, it also provides for a more comprehensive salvation for him and those who witness his restoration. While Jesus confirms that the healing was an opportunity for the works of God to be manifested through him, only the man who has been healed is recorded as taking advantage of the significance of the sign. He gains his sight, while the others remain blind, though they do not realise it (v. 41).⁹⁷⁷ The question of spiritual sight is thus the central theme of the passage.⁹⁷⁸ While the Pharisees recommend that the healed man give glory to God (v. 24), in his response (v. 38), insofar as he re-emphasises his healing, he does give glory to God for only God can heal (v. 39); again, they miss the irony of the situation and their determination not to see is accentuated by the author.

As in the previous healing narrative in John, a stress on the significance of the Sabbath, revealed late in the narrative (v. 14), has obstructed the clarity of vision concerning the person of Jesus. Cognisant of the fact that healing was forbidden on the Sabbath, except in cases of potential death, the Pharisees deduce that Jesus has broken the Sabbath laws (v. 16) as a result of which, they conclude he cannot be of God. The healing has opened the spiritual eyes

⁹⁷⁶ Bligh, J., "Four Stories in St. John: The man born blind", *HJ*, 7 (1996) 133.

⁹⁷⁷ The possible symbolism between darkness and light with blindness and sight has been explored by others including Maddocks, *The Christian...*, 50.

⁹⁷⁸ cf. Stibbe, *John*, 109.

of one but confirmed the blindness of the rest. As the way to receive physical sight is for the blind man to go and wash himself, so the unbeliever must be prepared to have himself cleansed in order to receive the Light of the World.⁹⁷⁹

From this point, the author raises the level of the discussion above that of the determining of Sabbath legislation to the identity of the person of Jesus.

In this regard, an appreciation is required of the important motif of obedience⁹⁸⁰ in the story as indicated by the willingness of the man to go to the pool of Siloam and the translation of the word "Siloam" by John.⁹⁸¹ As Jesus was sent by the Father and obeyed, so Jesus asks the same of the man. The willingness of the man to obey and perform an action that appears to be completely inappropriate for restorative purposes,⁹⁸² and despite the absence of a guarantee of healing, is to be contrasted with the absence of faith in the onlookers to believe in the presence of a man who has been confirmed by others as having received the restoration of his sight. Again, the sign is to be viewed as a catalyst although that which is determined by it is based on the personal judgement of the individual concerned. The healing is important but it is used by Jesus as a living parable to confront people with his person and his

⁹⁷⁹ cf. Torrance, "The Giving...", 75.

⁹⁸⁰ cf. Bruce, John, 210; Bernard, John, 2.329.

⁹⁸¹ Brodie (T.L., "Jesus as the New Elisha: Cracking the Code", ET, 93 (1981) 40) suggests this provides for John a parallel with Elisha so as to exalt Jesus as a prophet; the suggestions of Michaels (John, 164) that it refers to the sending of the Spirit and Grayston (John, 81) who links it to the blindness being sent away are to be dismissed because of insufficient evidence; Barrett (John, 359) suggests it refers to the mission undertaken by Jesus.

⁹⁸² Bligh ("Four...", 134f) unnecessarily writes, "material things which seem inadequate to their purpose can, by Christ's precept, receive power to give and sustain life"; the significance of the command is not because of the restorative qualities of the water but the association with the theme of obedience.

claims to be the Light of the World; a parable that in itself provides life and light for the individual concerned rather than a diatribe of judgement to come. The condemnation of his enemies only comes after they have rejected him. The issue relating to the cause of the sickness (v. 2) is not pertinent to the discussion.⁹⁸³ Jesus responds to the question of his disciples as to the cause of the man's blindness by stating that it was the fault of nobody, the man nor his parents. Instead, Jesus relates that it is to be understood as an opportunity for the works of God to be made manifest through him. The use of the adversative ἀλλὰ followed by ἵνα plus the subjunctive indicating purpose, helps to affirm the importance of this information.⁹⁸⁴ Such a manifestation demands a thoughtful and positive response.

It is Jesus, not the blind man, nor his healing, who is the focus of attention. Similarly, it is not spittle that is important as a therapeutic aid; what is significant is that it has come from Jesus. It is not the mixing of earthen paste that is significant but what it symbolises in creation (Gen. 2:7).⁹⁸⁵ The question remains as to whether the people will recognise that the healing is the creative work of God or a charlatan. The narrative describing the healing takes only seven verses; however, the scene has been set for the crucial debate to come (vs. 8-41) for which the healing has been a signpost on the path to faith.

⁹⁸³ Evidence for pre-birth causation may be gleaned from Wisd. 8:19f; cf. Philo, de Somn., 1.138; Bligh ("Four...", 131) suggests that it is a reference to God's foreknowledge concerning the man's sin in his life to come.

⁹⁸⁴ contra Tenney, John, 154; Bruce, John, 209.

⁹⁸⁵ cf. Bernard, John, 2.328; Sanders, John, 239; Lindars, John, 343.

In John 11:2-44, it is recorded that Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead. John records this after describing Jesus' rejection by many of the Jews in Jerusalem, culminating in their attempt to kill him (10:22-39). Having left Jerusalem, John records that many came to him and believed in him (10:40ff). However, this miracle, in particular, acted as a watershed, the opposition from that time seeking to destroy him (11:53), Jesus no longer preaching openly (11:54). In this extended narrative, Jesus, having been informed of Lazarus' illness, states that the illness is to be a vehicle for the glorification of the Son of God (v. 4).⁹⁸⁶ This is confirmed later when Jesus tells his disciples that Lazarus has died⁹⁸⁷ but that he is now to go to him "so that you may believe" (v. 15). The motif of belief is continued in the discussion about the resurrection between Jesus and Martha (vs. 21-27) in which she, in response to the request by Jesus as to whether she believes in him, confirms that she believes that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. In fact, the purpose of the narrative is focused more on the response of the bystanders, especially Mary and Martha, to the miracle than the resurrection itself.

⁹⁸⁶ That Jesus chooses not to go immediately to Lazarus, waiting instead 2 days, probably indicates an unwillingness to do anything other than follow the plan of God, rather than follow the dictates of others; cf. Morris, *John*, 540, Haenchen, *John 2*, 57; however, verse 15 indicates that the motivation of Jesus eventually going is to provide an opportunity for the development of their faith in him, a resurrection suggestive of greater authority on the part of Jesus than a healing; Gen. *Rab.* 100.64a describes the Jewish belief that after 3 days, the spirit of a person permanently leaves the body of the deceased and it is therefore possible that Jesus is waiting a sufficient time to prove that Lazarus was dead, thus highlighting the miracle.

⁹⁸⁷ The initial statement by Jesus that Lazarus has fallen asleep (v. 11f) has received comment. Lindars (*John*, 391) assumes an ambiguity between restoration from sickness and death while Barrett (*John*, 393) suggests it is a reference to death and resurrection; Beasley-Murray (*John*, 188f) assumes Jesus is referring to death though because this would be incongruous to the disciples, they therefore assume a reference to sleep.

All the characters in the story are prototypical of responses towards Jesus, including that of discipleship.⁹⁸⁸ All have the opportunity to witness the miracle and therefore to acknowledge Jesus as the Christ, but as with his other signs, some do, including Martha (v. 27; though see v. 39), while others, including Mary (vs. 29-32), do not. This is confirmed by the fact that after the resurrection, John records that many Jews believed in him (v. 45) though others instead reported the miracle to the Pharisees (v. 46). Thus, although signs are valid as evidence for the status of Jesus, they do not guarantee faith on the part of those who witness them. The potential, as noted by the chief priests and the Pharisees (v. 47f), was that as a result of the signs, many would believe in him though, as exemplified by those religious leaders, there was no surety that this would occur (11:57, 12:10).

The restoration of Lazarus and the recorded discourses between Jesus and the sisters focuses the attention of the reader, not on Lazarus or his restoration but, on the recognition hinted at and later expressly stated that Jesus has power not just to bestow life but to resurrect people to eternal life. He is the giver of life in all its realities (vs. 25f), "the central Christological idea of the fourth gospel".⁹⁸⁹

The resurrection itself occurs as a result of a word on the part of Jesus, not as the result of faith in the people present. Neither Martha (v. 24), Mary (v. 32) nor the onlookers (v. 37) anticipated a resurrection. The resurrection is

⁹⁸⁸ cf. Suggit, J.N., "The raising of Lazarus", *ET*, 95 (1984) 106-108.

⁹⁸⁹ Schnackenburg, *John*, 2. 316; cf. Kaye, *Supernatural...*, 56.

accomplished as a result of the sovereign authority that God has invested in Jesus. The purpose of the record of the resurrection is again to develop the significance of miracles as pointers to faith. Jesus is presented as the Resurrection and Life (vs. 25f) and thus has power to impart both, this being actualised in Lazarus, his resurrection being the catalyst for the ensuing discussion.⁹⁹⁰

The miracle is an opportunity for those present to witness that authority and to decide what their attitude will be to Jesus and his offer of eternal life. Although the resurrection will obviously be of immediate benefit to Lazarus, the wider principle established has to do with its significance in enabling others to develop faith in Jesus.

In conclusion, the physical restorations effected by Jesus are of significant value for they provide an opportunity for individuals to recognise that Jesus is not just a healer or even a better healer than anyone else but that he offers a route back to God that will result in a complete transformation of life and restoration of harmony with the Creator. In his healings, Jesus offered freedom to those bound by illness and any attendant societal or religious restrictions, making it possible for them to be reintegrated into their society and faith community. Although not all benefited from the potential provided by Jesus to actualise their freedom fully, nevertheless it formed part of the work of

⁹⁹⁰ cf. Lindars, B., "Rebuking the Spirit: A new analysis of the Lazarus story of John 11", NTS, 38. 1 (1992) 89-104.

the Saviour to a humanity in its weakness.⁹⁹¹ However, more importantly, the healings created the possibility for a fuller appreciation of the person and status of Jesus leading potentially to relational wholeness with God. It is in this regard that Melinsky's comment is helpful when he argues that Jesus "did not heal people just to make them better. He healed them so that they, and those who witnessed the healing, should by it be moved to respond to the challenge of the kingdom which they had personally experienced".⁹⁹² The healings of Jesus, whilst granting physical restoration, do not exclude the possibility of spiritual restoration also.⁹⁹³ In this lies a marked contrast between much contemporary Christian healing and that of Jesus; the latter, in his miracles, always intended to take the sufferer beyond the healing to a superior level of relationship.

Discipleship lessons

As well as expressing qualities and aspects of the mission and person of Jesus, the healings often provided opportunities for Jesus to teach his followers concerning discipleship. The Gospel writers sought to transmit these lessons faithfully for the benefit of their readers. Thus, the importance of humility,⁹⁹⁴ the necessity of an ongoing and developing relationship with

⁹⁹¹ Matt. 4:23; 9:6-8, 35; 10:1, 7f; 11:4f, 20-30; Mk. 1:39; 6:7, 12f; Lk. 4:18f, 40-43; 5:15, 17; 6:17f; 7:22; 9:6; 10:13-15; 13:32; Jn. 11:47f.

⁹⁹² Healing..., 26.

⁹⁹³ Mk 2:17; 5:34; Lk. 7:50; cf. Pilch, J.J., "Sickness and Healing in Luke-Acts", BibT, 27.1 (Jan., 1989) 22; Bosch, "Mission...", 10; Carroll, "Sickness...", 137..

⁹⁹⁴ Mk. 9:38-41//s.

Jesus⁹⁹⁵ and the centrality of service⁹⁹⁶ are presented in the context of healings. However, the two main lessons for followers of Jesus relate to the primacy of faith and obedience.

Faith

(see also Matthew 8:5-13//s; 9:18f and 23-26//s; 9:20-22//s, 27-31; 13:51//s; 14:34-36//s; 15:21-28//s; 17:14-21//s; 20:29-34//s)

The concept of faith is significant in each of the Gospels in the context of Jesus' healings. However, its meaning is of vital importance. It is thus necessary to explore the literary background and, more importantly, the contextual use of this term in order to better identify its meaning in the writings of the individual authors

The meaning of the term "faith"

In secular Greek writings, the basic meaning of "pistis" and its cognates is that of "trust" and/or "trustworthiness".⁹⁹⁷ The term "πιστις" and its cognates are used over 130 times in the LXX, the most common contextual meaning there

⁹⁹⁵ Mk. 8:22-26; 9:38-41//s.

⁹⁹⁶ Mt. 8:14f//s.

⁹⁹⁷ Michel, O., "Faith", NIDNTT, 11.594ff; Liddell, H.G., Scott, R., LS, Oxford: Clarendon Press (1989) 1408; BAGD, 662; Turner, N., Christian Words, Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark (1980) 153; Moulton (J.H.) and Milligan (G., MM, London: HS (1930) 514f) note two other similar meanings for "πιστις": - "confidence" and "guarantee".

and throughout Jewish writings being "faithful, faithfulness".⁹⁹⁸ Philo, in particular, contrasts "πιστις" with "doubt", "uncertainty" or "mistrust".⁹⁹⁹

Faithfulness to the Torah is integral to the concept of faith.¹⁰⁰⁰ This active aspect of faith is repeated in other Jewish writings.¹⁰⁰¹

In the New Testament, "πιστις" and its cognates may largely be translated to mean "trust" or "faithfulness".¹⁰⁰² Faith is a common ingredient in healings in the Gospels and appears to relate to trust in both the person and mission of Jesus¹⁰⁰³ and his willingness and ability to provide healing.¹⁰⁰⁴

Thus, in a wide range of contexts in the literature consulted, the basic meaning of "πιστις" is equated with "belief, trust, faithfulness".¹⁰⁰⁵ It will be now helpful to examine some of the healing accounts, in which faith figures as an important element, to determine its meaning in the context of healing. The concept of

⁹⁹⁸ egs. Deut. 7:9; 1 Sam. 3:20; Prov. 25:13; Isa. 8:2; Hos. 2:20; Jos. Against Apion 1.6; De Op. Mun. 45; De Mut. Nom. 154; Leg. All. 3.204, 228; De Cher. 14.

⁹⁹⁹ De Pos. Cai. 13; De Con. Ling. 31; De Mut. Nom. 201.

¹⁰⁰⁰ Gen. 15:6; Isa. 7:9; Hab. 2:4; Mid. Gen. 132:6; 53:3; 1 Qp Hab. 7.17f; Garlington (D.B., The Obedience of Faith, Tübingen: Mohr (1990) 7) notes, "the voice of God is the primary reference point of the pious Israelite's obedience".

¹⁰⁰¹ Philo Gen. 14:91; De Con. Ling. 156, 198; De Mig. Abr. 143, 171; Mid. Gen. 11:7; Ex. 12:8; Lev. 12:9.2; Num. 119:10; Jos. Against Apion 2.169; cf. Hill, D., Greek Words and Hebrew Meanings, Cambridge: CUP (1967) 145.

¹⁰⁰² Divine faithfulness (Rom. 3:3); human faithfulness (Gal. 5:22); trust in God (Mk. 11:22; 1 Pet. 1:21); trust in Christ (Matt. 8:10; 9:2, 29); synonym for believers (Lk. 18:8; Acts 16:1).

¹⁰⁰³ Matt. 18:6; 21:25; 27:42.

¹⁰⁰⁴ Matt. 8:13; 9:22, 28f; 15:28; Mk. 2:5; 5:34; 9:24; 10:52.

¹⁰⁰⁵ A similar range of meanings may be located in the writings of the Fathers (AG, 662f; Lampe, G.W.H., A Patristic Greek Lexicon, Oxford: Clarendon Press (1978) 1083f). Here, it is also contrasted with doubt and uncertainty (Herm. Mand. 19.9; Bas. Moral. 18; Ath. Apol. 12.11) and miracles are said to follow the request offered in faith (2 Clem 15.2; Theodoret Hist. Eccl. 4.16.3).

faith has been commented on in detail earlier with regard to Matthew 9:20-22 and parallels in which it was deduced that the faith identified by Jesus in the action of the woman was to be equated with the confidence that she had in his ability to help her.

In Matthew 8:5-13//Luke 7:1-10, Jesus is recorded as healing the servant of a Gentile from a distance at the man's request, the healing being associated with the man's faith, reference being made to this feature in the final words of Jesus.

Matthew records this story immediately after the account of the cleansing of the leper which itself follows the Sermon on the Mount. For Matthew, the quality of faith exhibited by the centurion is a useful practical link between the teaching concerning faith as recorded in the Sermon on the Mount (5-7) and the faith needed to be a true disciple as recorded immediately afterwards in 8:14-22. Indeed, this is the first reference to faith in Matthew and it is exhibited by a Gentile. Luke also places this healing immediately after his truncated Sermon. For Luke, the motif of trust in the word of Jesus as recorded in the previous pericope (6:46-49) is continued in the practical example of the Gentile centurion who is willing to trust in the word of Jesus with regard to the healing of his servant (7:7). The central motif to both writers is that of faith/trust; the man acknowledges the authority of Jesus and this is identified by Jesus as faith.

The phrase, "I will come and heal him" (Matt. 8:7), has been interpreted by many as a question, "shall I come and heal him?",¹⁰⁰⁶ the initial pronoun seemingly emphatic.¹⁰⁰⁷ A reason for such a question would be to test the man's faith in the ability of Jesus to heal.¹⁰⁰⁸ Whether it is a statement or a question, the dilemma for the centurion is based on the fact that he is reluctant for Jesus to come to his home, because he is a Gentile¹⁰⁰⁹ and/or because he feels unworthy in comparison to the person of Jesus.¹⁰¹⁰ Luke 7:7 offers the information that his sense of unworthiness restricted him from visiting Jesus initially, choosing instead to send elders to mediate on his behalf, the interest of Luke being focused on the person of the centurion. It is precisely on the basis of their perception of his worthiness that the elders plead for Jesus to respond to his request.¹⁰¹¹ However, the healing is not granted on the basis of his worthiness but after he demonstrates his belief that Jesus has the authority to grant his wish. His apparent worthiness is irrelevant to the restoration of the

¹⁰⁰⁶ Hagner, Matthew, 204; cf. France, Matthew, 154; Gundry, Matthew, 142; Davies and Allison, Matthew, 2.22; Morris, Matthew, 193; contra Hooke, S.H., "Jesus and the Centurion: Matthew 8. 5-10", ET, 69 (1957/58) 79; Bruner (Matthew, 1.303) also prefers an affirmation on the part of Jesus because of the chapter's "unconditional grace".

¹⁰⁰⁷ cf. France, Matthew, 154; Davies and Allison, Matthew, 2.22.

¹⁰⁰⁸ cf. France, Matthew, 155.

¹⁰⁰⁹ M. 'Ohol 18:7 states that a Jew would become ceremonially unclean on entering a Gentile's home; there are no references to Jesus entering a Gentile home for any reason and the only healing of a Gentile occurs at a distance. However, Luke 7:6 identifies the elders who mediate on his behalf as his friends (7:6) and he is described as one who loves "το ἔθνος ἡμῶν", having also built a synagogue, all of which suggests a close alliance with things Jewish.

¹⁰¹⁰ Gundry, Matthew, 143.

¹⁰¹¹ Lk. 7:4f; cf. Martin (R., "The Pericope of the Healing of the Centurion's Servant/Son (Matt. 8:5-13 par. Luke 7:1-10): Some Exegetical Notes", Unity and Diversity in New Testament Theology, (ed.) Guelich, R., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans (1978) 18) views this as attesting "the Roman's integrity, worthiness and humility as part of his...interest in presenting the Gentiles in a favourable light.

servant, though important to the elders; his readiness to trust Jesus is all important.

So certain is his belief that Jesus can heal his servant that he acknowledges it can be achieved without travelling to the sick person. He accepts that Jesus can heal simply by the use of a word (8:8), even though there is no record of Jesus healing from a distance thus far. The healing is granted and the expression of faith by the centurion is an important element in the process.

The faith of the centurion is therefore worthy of comment, given that it is the reason for Jesus' commendation. Morris¹⁰¹² describes his faith as, "trust in Jesus...in his ability and readiness to give help". This equates with its general use as expressed earlier. It is particularly significant to recognise that the commendation of Jesus is to a Gentile who expresses trust in his ability to meet his need.¹⁰¹³ The faith exhibited by the Gentile centurion is further highlighted in its contrast to the lack of faith in the people of Israel, where it would be assumed to have been more readily found (vs. 11f).¹⁰¹⁴ He is envisaged as being representative of many who will come from non-Jewish settings to the Kingdom with a readiness to trust Jesus whatever their problem might be. The faith of the man draws a commendation from Jesus because it

¹⁰¹² Matthew, 193; cf. France, Matthew, 155; Patte, Matthew, 114; Stenger, New Testament..., 106; the suggestion by Van der Loos (The Miracles..., 540) that the man recognises Jesus as the initiator of the New Age goes beyond the available evidence.

¹⁰¹³ see 15:21-28.

¹⁰¹⁴ Fitzmyer (Luke, 1. 658) speculatively interprets the words of Jesus as not meaning that he has not found such faith reflected anywhere else in Israel but "only that he was not prepared to admit its existence in a Gentile".

reflects a belief in the authority of Jesus to achieve healing irrespective of potential obstacles, of which distance is but one. It is to be viewed more as faith or confidence in the person of Jesus to effect a healing than as a catalyst to cause the healing to take place.

A similar expression of faith is recorded in Matthew 9:18f, 22-26 (and parallels) concerning the account of the restoration of a Ruler's daughter.¹⁰¹⁵ The Matthean record emphasises the expectation of the ruler in that he asks Jesus for help even though his child is dead.¹⁰¹⁶ His faith is demonstrated by his request.

Mark and Luke record that before they arrive at the ruler's house, news reaches them that the girl has died. Jesus responds by saying to the ruler, "Do not fear, only believe", Luke adding, "and she will be well". The ruler is not presented as exercising more faith in response to Jesus' words. Indeed, the qualifying "only" suggests that the ruler is not expected to "increase" his level of faith. His faith has already been established in coming to Jesus. He is not encouraged to have faith nor to increase his faith; rather, he is exhorted not to fear because "all will be well". The faith that is requested is to be equated with a confidence in the power of Jesus. This he has already demonstrated;

¹⁰¹⁵ see Pesch (R., "Jairus (Mk. 5:22/Lk. 8:41)", *BZ*, 14 (1970) 152-156) for a discussion concerning the significance of the name of the ruler.

¹⁰¹⁶ Patte (*Matthew*, 132) qualifies the quality of this expression of faith by suggesting that the ruler still needs Jesus to come to his house and lay hands on the girl before the healing will occur. However, although this was not true in the pericope relating to the centurion, here the child is dead and this alone indicates the quality of his trust in Jesus' power.

therefore, he is reassured by Jesus that the situation will be resolved positively. He needs to do no more; Jesus will provide the answer. Similarly, in Luke 17:6, in response to the request of the disciples that Jesus increase their faith, Luke does not record him confirming that he will do so nor affirming the correctness of such a prayer. Instead, he replies that a minute amount of faith, akin to the smallness of a mustard seed, is all that is needed to effect miracles. That which is needed is the presence of faith not the increase of it.¹⁰¹⁷

The suggestion, as reflected in section two, that an insufficient amount of faith could restrict Jesus is wrong on two counts. Firstly, the teaching of Jesus concerning faith relates to its existence, not its quantity. The person who comes to Jesus has already expressed faith, sufficient to achieve a response. Secondly, the belief that one's faith can be developed so that it can achieve a greater level of success is a distortion of the teaching of the New Testament concerning faith and an undermining of the majesty, wisdom and love of Jesus, making him a servant of a faith that manipulates, coerces or even enables him to function. The encouragement by some Christians to develop greater faith in order that healing might occur is an unnecessary cause of great heartache for those who remain unhealed.¹⁰¹⁸

¹⁰¹⁷ cf. Bruner, Matthew, 2.622; France, Matthew, 266; Nolland, Luke, 2.838.

¹⁰¹⁸ cf. Vaughan, Saints..., 44; Huggett, J., Healing in the Balance, Eastbourne: Kingsway (1989) 129; Wagner, How to..., 252f; Scott, Healing..., 47ff.

The concept of faith is also recorded in Matthew 20:29-34 and parallels. That which is again fundamentally important to the healing is identified as faith and that faith is demonstrated by the simple request for help by the blind men. It is affirmed, in the presentations of Mark and Luke, by their description of Jesus as the Messianic Son of David, in contrast to the crowd's geographically based term, "Jesus of Nazareth". Although still physically blind, they demonstrate evidence that their spiritual blindness has been (or is being) removed.

Each author records that they appeal to the mercy of Jesus, thus emphasising that they believed that Jesus had the ability to help them; the issue was whether he would help them and thus they appeal to his mercy. Since blindness was often understood as a punishment for sin,¹⁰¹⁹ their cry for mercy is understandable, and their faith in Jesus emphasised since, in their perception, to receive healing would involve the forgiveness of their sins.

Although desperation may cause irrational actions, they are unlikely to appeal to Jesus unless there is the possibility that he can meet their need.

In response to their appeal, Jesus asks them what it is they wish him to do for them. It is not necessary to view this as a perversity on his part to insist that they request the obvious nor is it that he wishes them to submerge any pride and ask specifically that he heal them.¹⁰²⁰ Furthermore, it is not indicative of the fact that he lacks the knowledge concerning their need.¹⁰²¹ It is rather to be

¹⁰¹⁹ Gen. 19:11; Ex. 4:11; Deut. 28:28f; 2 Kings 6:18; Matt. 12:22; Jn. 9:2; Acts 13:11; b. Hag. 16a; Sabb. 108b; Lev. 21:20 prohibits a man with defective sight from becoming a priest and blind animals were unacceptable as sacrifices (Lev. 22:22; Deut. 15:21; Mal. 1:8).

¹⁰²⁰ cf. Harper, Healings..., 90.

¹⁰²¹ cf. Taylor, Mark, 449.

recognised that each author wishes to record the crucially important feature of the presence of faith in the context of healing.

Their appeal to Jesus to have mercy on them and their acknowledgement of his identity is proof already of their faith in him, it being expressed in the hostile environment of a crowd who wish them to be silent. The request of Jesus is as much for the benefit of the hearers (and through the Synoptists, the readers) to recognise that the healing occurs in association with faith in him. The faith is articulated in their simple response to his question in which they confirm that he can deliver that which they request. They acknowledge that he can help; Jesus affirms this as faith.

The purpose of the pericope may be identified thus. Each author presents the healing as being beyond the power of humanity to resolve. The faith of the sufferer(s), identified by the acknowledgement of the superior status of Jesus, his mercy and most importantly, the confidence in his ability to meet the need, is viewed as being that which is integral to the achievement of the miracle.¹⁰²²

Faith is important to the healing process though it need not be understood as automatically enabling the flow of healing power to be transmitted. Rather, the situation may be understood thus. In response to, but not because of, the

¹⁰²² Lk. 9:43; Sinclair (S.G., "The healing of Bartimaeus and gaps in Mark's Messianic Secret", *SLJT*, 33.4 (1990) 249-257) suggests that the reason why Mark does not record Jesus insisting on silence (1:25, 34, 44; 3:11f; 5:21ff, 43; 7:36; 8:26, 29f) concerning the miracle is because the miracle demonstrates the person's faith and not the mere power of the miracle worker; as such, it is appropriate to share the story with others.

presence of belief in Jesus' ability to heal and therefore in his superior personage, a sovereign act of healing power by Jesus is achieved; such authority does not require any external stimulus. Thus, Derrett,¹⁰²³ speaking of the faith exhibited by the centurion when he asks Jesus to heal his son, states that the boy was "cured as a free gift", the faith being irrelevant to the cure in terms of it demanding reciprocity.

The identity of faith preceding healing

The concept of faith in the context of healing is a lively issue in the contemporary Church.¹⁰²⁴ As has been demonstrated, many of those involved in healing ministries, including those previously discussed, view Jesus' healing ministry as a paradigm for contemporary Christians. However, the faith anticipated is markedly different to that commended by Jesus.

This disparity is noticed in many proponents of divine healing. In response to the question as to whether one should believe that God can heal or that he will heal, Huggett¹⁰²⁵ responds by suggesting that it is usually right to believe that

¹⁰²³ Derrett, J.D.M., "Law in the New Testament: The Syrophoenician woman and the Centurion of Capernaum", NovT, 15.3 (1973) 183.

¹⁰²⁴ Hopson (R.E., "The Role of Faith in the Psychotherapeutic Context", JRH, 31.2 (Summer 1992) 95-105; cf. Chirban, J.T., "Healing and Spirituality", PP, 40.4 (1992) 235-244; Prasinos, S., "Spiritual Aspects of Psychotherapy", JRH, 31. 1 (Spring 1992) 41-52) argues for the presence of faith as providing contemporary psychotherapeutic benefit for those suffering; however, Melinsky (Healing..., 23) describes as anachronistic the idea that the faith of the gospels may be identified with suggestibility.

¹⁰²⁵ Healing..., 157; cf. Worrall, A.A., The Gift of Healing, New York:Harper and Row (1965) 194.

he will heal. Urquhart¹⁰²⁶ goes further and writes, "Faith is being sure and certain...Everyone knows God *can* heal; the issue is whether the person believes God *will* heal him or her when we pray". Basing his beliefs on Mark 11:23f, he states, "To pray with faith means that we believe we have already received the answer to our prayer...**Faith believes it has happened, even when there is no immediate evidence to substantiate that**".¹⁰²⁷ He equates the absence of such belief with sin.¹⁰²⁸ Cockburn¹⁰²⁹ notes, "If we confess that we are still sick, this will bind the sickness more firmly upon us". Similarly, Huggett¹⁰³⁰ states that Satan "may recreate the symptoms of an old condition and we must stand firm in what God has said until the symptoms leave".

Prince¹⁰³¹ states that an absence of gratitude for one's "healing" before it has taken place isolates people in a position where it is almost "impossible for God's healing power to continue to operate in their bodies". Similarly, he states that when a "person's faith ceases to be active, the process of healing is then arrested" diagnosing the reason for a person remaining ill as that they "did not continue to exercise active faith for a long enough period of time to

¹⁰²⁶ Urquhart, C., The Truth that sets you free, London:HS (1993) 152; cf. Cerullo, Christ..., 38, 59f, 85, 90, 117, 167; "God has spoken", Victory Miracle Living, (Nov., 1994) 13; Blue, K., Authority to Heal, Downers Grove:InterVarsity Press (1987) 72.

¹⁰²⁷ The Truth..., 158 (bold original); cf. "How to pray for healing", Renewal, 110 (April/May 1984) 20f; Cerullo, M., The Miracle Book, San Diego:MCWE (1984) 39ff, 85ff, 100ff; Hinn, B., Lord, I need a miracle, Milton Keynes:Word (1993) 85; Scott, Healing..., 47.

¹⁰²⁸ Urquhart, C., "Despite the mysteries, healing actually happens", Renewal, 121 (Feb/Mar 1986) 25.

¹⁰²⁹ Cockburn, I., "Divine Healing", Renewal, 41 (Oct/Nov 1972) 22f; cf. Cerullo, M., Proof Producers, San Diego:MCWE (1972) 87; The Miracle..., 100.

¹⁰³⁰ Healing..., 133.

¹⁰³¹ Prince, D., Laying on of hands, (n.p. n.d.) 17.

allow the process of healing to be completed".¹⁰³² Such analyses of faith are not only remote from Biblical evidence but are more descriptive of a form of positive thinking that impacts one's body/psyche with inexorable energy.

Moltmann's perception that "Jesus is dependent on this faith" is based on a similar misunderstanding concerning the identity of faith.¹⁰³³

Analogously, Maddocks¹⁰³⁴ describes the use of the phrase "if it be your will" as harmful to a healing ministry. Pearson¹⁰³⁵ argues that such a prayer "sows seeds of doubt" and so prefers to offer "please heal me Lord in accordance with your will". He describes this as a "balanced prayer" that "affirms confidently the fact God wants to heal us while it honours His sovereignty in allowing Him to determine when and how". However, there is an incongruity about this approach since he is aware that many will not be healed and his prayer appears to be practically no different to another who prays "if it be your will". Pedantic theories are of little help. More appositely, though not without its problems, Macnutt¹⁰³⁶ states, "It is safe to say that for some, 'claiming their healing' is what releases the current of God's healing power. But to say that this method is for all sick persons leads...to grave pastoral harm". Vogel¹⁰³⁷ states that our integrity is maintained by acknowledging our problems, not pretending that they do not exist while God's integrity is maintained by his

¹⁰³² ibid, 16.

¹⁰³³ The Way..., 112.

¹⁰³⁴ The Christian..., 119; cf. Hinn, Lord..., 89.

¹⁰³⁵ Christian..., 63f; cf. MacNutt, Healing, 206.

¹⁰³⁶ Healing, 140.

¹⁰³⁷ Vogel, God..., 56.

unique perspective on life. Similarly, Strawson¹⁰³⁸ writes, "The least satisfactory approach is to try to maintain that suffering is not real".

As the texts discussed in the previous sections demonstrate, many of these modern views are not substantiated in the Gospels. The faith that brought a response from Jesus was simply identified with a readiness to go to him for help. Sometimes, no faith was expressed on the part of the sufferer.¹⁰³⁹ On some occasions, the readiness to believe appears strong¹⁰⁴⁰ while at other times, it appears to be weaker;¹⁰⁴¹ sometimes, it appears to be equated with superstition.¹⁰⁴² The variety of faith expressions is to be remembered when confronting a simplistic equation that asserts that faith automatically results in healing.

The faith that Jesus required from his disciples was a readiness to believe that which he had already told them about their authority to heal. Given the particular role of Jesus in establishing the Kingdom, a proof of which was his healing ministry, it is to be remembered that Jesus did not heal all the sick in Judea or Galilee; neither was this due to some inadequacy on their part. The reason for all that Jesus did related to his obedience to the will of the Father. The same latter foundational element, ipso facto, undergirds the way he deals with believers today. The faith that Jesus commends is one that simply

¹⁰³⁸ Strawson, W., "The Theology of Healing", Religion..., (ed.) Crowlesmith, 91.
¹⁰³⁹ Mt. 8:1ff//s, 14//s; 12:9ff//s; Lk. 7:11-17; 13:10-17; 14:1-6; 22:50; Jn. 5:2-47; 11:2-44.
¹⁰⁴⁰ Mt. 8:5-13//s; 9:27-31; 15:21-28//s.
¹⁰⁴¹ Jn. 4:46-54.
¹⁰⁴² Mt. 9:20ff//s.

involves a willingness to trust him. This is a progression from the Old Testament era in which the faith required for health and healing was of covenantal obedience.¹⁰⁴³ In the Gospels, a different quality of faith is anticipated and the uniqueness of Jesus is again signified.

Dibelius¹⁰⁴⁴ views the faith expressed in the Synoptics in the context of healings by Jesus as being "confidence that Jesus, the great miracle-worker, excelled all other thaumaturges". Similarly, Brown¹⁰⁴⁵ identifies the faith that Jesus commends as when "people put their trust in him, and in him alone". Brown however, appears to be investing faith with a deeper meaning than the text allows. There is no suggestion that the people who sought Jesus for healing did so without recourse to anyone else. For the woman with the blood flow, Jesus was the last resort. Likewise, Gnilka's perception that it is to be identified with the faith of Jesus is unwarranted. Similarly, his assumption that Jesus advocates that people "share in his faith" states more than the text will allow.¹⁰⁴⁶

Latourelle¹⁰⁴⁷ describes it as "an active trust that overcomes obstacles in order to reach Jesus; it is a faith that...rests on the certainty that Jesus has within himself a power to save". Jesus' demands concerning faith are not so high as

¹⁰⁴³ Ex. 23:24ff; Lev. 26:14-16, 24f, 30, 39; Deut. 7:1-16; 28:15, 20ff.

¹⁰⁴⁴ From Tradition..., 79; cf. Held, "Matthew...", 279f.

¹⁰⁴⁵ Israel's..., 224; cf. Weatherhead, "Present-Day...", 56; Frank, Tough..., 75.

¹⁰⁴⁶ Jesus..., 128.

¹⁰⁴⁷ The Miracles..., 245; cf. Sanford, Healing..., 52-56; Dunn, Jesus..., 74; Bornkamm, G., Jesus of Nazareth, New York:Harper and Row (1960) 103; Kydd, Healing..., 15.

to be hardly attainable but so simple as to be achievable by a child.¹⁰⁴⁸

Moltmann's¹⁰⁴⁹ claim that "Faith has to be understood, not merely as sincere trust, but also as the urgent desire of the person concerned" is extreme. The faith that looks to Jesus for help is the faith he commends. It is the faith that affirms, "he can". The recognition that Jesus is able to meet a need is a valid basis for him to do so (Matt. 9:28f). It is more a recognition of his person than his power.¹⁰⁵⁰ The healing acts as a demonstration, amongst other aspects, of the validity of the trust placed in Jesus, rather than the key that automatically unlocks the power of healing.

What is of crucial importance is the recognition that Jesus' healing ministry is integrally related to his mission, previously argued as being unique. As such, the presence of faith in the context of his healing ministry is appropriately understood as a trust in the person of Jesus who has come to heal as part of his wider ministry and mission.

Matthew 21:21 offers a promise to the person who believes and does not doubt (διακρινω). Elsewhere in the Bible, "διακρινω" generally means "I discern" or "I judge", often in a positive way.¹⁰⁵¹ However, on occasions, it is used negatively when the meaning of "distrust" is more appropriate.¹⁰⁵² The instability of the doubter is seen in his unwillingness to trust God. This is not to be identified

¹⁰⁴⁸ Matt. 11:25; 18:3f; 19:14; Mk. 10:14; Lk. 18:16.

¹⁰⁴⁹ The Way..., 111.

¹⁰⁵⁰ cf. Cranfield, C.E.B., "St. Mark 9:14-29", SJT, 3 (1950) 65.

¹⁰⁵¹ Ex. 18:16; Lev. 24:12; Job 9:14; Acts 15:9.

¹⁰⁵² Matt. 21:21; 1 Cor. 11:29; Philo Gen. 13:58; 4:17.

as doubt or uncertainty but an unwillingness to believe.¹⁰⁵³ Such is the gravity of this condition; it is not immature faith, but wilful lack of faith.¹⁰⁵⁴ The faith advocated by Jesus in prayer may therefore be interpreted as "trust", "belief" or "assurance", the opposite of which is "mistrust", "doubt" or more particularly, "unwillingness to believe". It is equivalent to a belief that he was able to provide that which had been requested, the healings being part of his mission strategy for reasons enumerated earlier.

On only one occasion does it appear that Jesus' ministry of healing is partially impeded.¹⁰⁵⁵ However, as will be indicated, the unbelief on the part of the people is to be understood as an absence of faith, an unwillingness to believe, rather than an insufficient faith that needed development.

Jesus' rejection at Nazareth

In order to further clarify the identity of faith, it is important to explore Jesus' rejection at Nazareth (Matt. 13:51-58//Mk. 6:1-6//Lk. 4:16-30) and his acceptance at Gennesaret (Matt. 14:34-36//Mk. 6:53-56). The rejection of Jesus by his own people and his limited ministry is recorded in all the Synoptics, though the latter fact is only implied in the Lukan account and he

¹⁰⁵³ eg. Herm. Vis. 13.3.4; Bartlett, The Epistle..., 180-182.

¹⁰⁵⁴ The description of "double-minded" (διψυχος) is ascribed to such a person in James 1:7. It is used also in James 4:8, in parallel with "sinners who are called to repent".

¹⁰⁵⁵ Mt. 13:51-58//s; 14:34-36//s.

includes substantial unique information. The context in which the individual authors place the passage is crucial to its interpretation.

Why does Matthew tell the story?

The wider context in which Matthew places this narrative is of significant importance. Matthew introduces it with a collection of six parables and intermittent teaching concerning the value and purposes of parabolic teaching, including the feature that as well as potentially enlightening, they confirm unbelief in those who choose not to believe. Following this, he describes the unbelief of those in Nazareth, despite the context of an opportunity to believe, as a result of which, he records that Jesus "did not do many works there".

The unbelief of the people of Nazareth is to be contrasted with that of Herod in the following narrative (14:2). Despite his only hearing about the fame of Jesus, Herod assumes that Jesus is John the Baptist, raised from the dead. He recognises the possibility of supernatural forces at work in him attributing them to John the Baptist.¹⁰⁵⁶ A man who has not met Jesus is contrasted with those who are in his presence and who still reject him. Jesus' kinsfolk are astonished at his wisdom and power but, because of his known pedigree, are offended by him.¹⁰⁵⁷ Significantly, Jesus states, "blessed is he who take no offence at me" (11:6).

¹⁰⁵⁶ Matt. 11:18.

¹⁰⁵⁷ cf. Jn. 7:5.

However, the narrative concerning Herod is also related to that which follows for although he recognised something of the charisma of Jesus, his perception is not to be equated with faith. Intellectual recognition of the authority of Jesus, partial or complete, is not faith, the latter needing active trust and obedience to determine it. Significantly, Matthew, having inserted the chronologically earlier information concerning the arrest of John the Baptist, moves next to the feeding of the 5000 (14:13-21). Although it may be assumed that Matthew uses the Herod pericope as an editorial comment to preface this earlier story concerning John, it is preferable to view it as a development of his theological grid. In it, he reveals Jesus meeting the needs of people, both in the provision of food and healing, as a result of his compassion for them. However, the compassion, which appears here to be the reason for his healing those who are ill (14:14) is for those who have followed him, on foot, from the towns to "the lonely place apart" (14:13) to which he has retreated. That they have come to him is sufficient proof of their faith in him. This basic expression of faith results in his healing those who are ill and is to be contrasted with the rejection of Jesus by those who were in his presence in the town in which he grew up and to which he has now specifically returned. He goes to them and they reject him while others go to him and thereby prove their readiness to express faith in him. The linking story of Herod's respect for Jesus reveals the seriousness of the rejection and unbelief of his kinsfolk and original neighbours, the simple faith of the 5000 showing the potential that was lost by those whom he had taught in their own synagogues (13:54).

Significantly, Matthew then records the story of Peter walking on the water as a result of his faith in Jesus (14:28-33). This leads to his confession that Jesus is the Son of God, concluding with the account of many others who, having recognised Jesus, sought him for healing, even for a touch of his clothing that resulted in their restoration (14:34-36). They express their faith in Jesus by simply coming to him and asking for his permission to touch his clothes. The people of Nazareth are not recipients of healing power because they lack a similar readiness to trust him. Even Herod, a Jewish anti-hero, indicates a more developed appreciation of Jesus than do his kinsfolk.

Why does Mark tell the story?

Mark also places this narrative in the context of accounts stressing the importance of faith. Thus, it follows the rejection of Jesus by those who witnessed the transformation of the Gerasene Demoniac (5:1-20); the commendation of the faith of the woman who touched Jesus' garment (5:25-34) and; the encouragement to Jairus to believe (5:21-24, 35-43). As both 5:25-34 and 5:21-24, 35-43 concentrate on the significance of faith, so the healings experienced at Gennesaret (6:55f) record the result of faith on the part of those who brought the sick to Jesus laying them in the markets, seeking simply to touch him.

Thus, the scene is prepared for the opportunity of those who know him most to also express their faith in him. However, inexplicably, they reject him, resulting

in Mark recording Jesus' amazement. (They are to be identified with those who had earlier (5:17) rejected Jesus after witnessing the extraordinary exorcism of the Gerasene demoniac). Although, according to 6:2, they were astonished at his wisdom and supernatural power, they still reflected unbelief. A recognition of the reality of the former did not result in faith; such is the mystery of the Kingdom. In contrast to those who were scandalised by Jesus, the 5000 (6:30ff), Peter (6:45ff) and those at Gennesaret (6:53ff) are willing to walk to him wherever he is, whatever the cost to their prestige or person, in order to benefit from him. Even when, in the case of Peter, failure occurs, the incomplete expression of faith on the part of the individual is sufficient to ensure that Jesus does not fail. For Mark, faith in Jesus, identified as movement towards him, is crucial to receiving from Jesus; rejection of him, an expression of a lack of faith, results in an unfulfilled potential.

This ongoing motif of unbelief, which resulted in the people missing out on the benefits gained from Jesus' ministry, is to be contrasted with the earlier record of the faith of a woman and a ceremonially unclean one at that. A marginalised member of society who is an offence to official Judaism is commended for her faith (5:34) while close members of Jesus' family are offended by him and condemned for their lack of faith.

Nevertheless, it is to be noted that even in Nazareth in the presence of unbelief, he did perform some miracles. The paucity of miracles performed does not reflect any inability on the part of Jesus; rather, it reflects the

stultifying effect of deliberate unbelief with regard to the potential benefits available from Jesus.

The significant difference between the accounts of Matthew and Mark is that whereas Matthew records Jesus "did not do many mighty works there", Mark includes, "he could do no mighty work there" except to heal a few sick folk. This has variously been explained. Hooker¹⁰⁵⁸ states, "Mighty works cannot be done except in a context of faith - and this faith (with a few exceptions) was lacking, for the people had rejected his teaching". Melinsky¹⁰⁵⁹ describes faith as being "necessary for healing not because a cure was physically impossible without it, but because it would have been spiritually meaningless". Thus, given that there was lacking an interpretative grid of faith to clarify the meaning of the miracles, it was not appropriate that they be provided for they could not be simultaneously incorporated into the ministry plan of Jesus. Their lack of faith proved that they were not ready for entrance into the Kingdom of God.¹⁰⁶⁰ Similarly, rather than suggest that Jesus lacked power in Nazareth, Lane¹⁰⁶¹ writes, "The performance of miracles in the absence of faith could have resulted only in the aggravation of human guilt". To perform miracles there would have placed the people of Nazareth in a state of greater condemnation for it would have accentuated their guilt in not just rejecting Jesus but doing so

¹⁰⁵⁸ Mark, 154; cf. Blue, Authority..., 102; Patte, Matthew, 207.

¹⁰⁵⁹ Healing..., 23, 36; cf. Ridderbos, The Coming..., 118; Heil, The Gospel..., 134.

¹⁰⁶⁰ Maddocks, The Christian..., 40.

¹⁰⁶¹ Mark, 204.

in the context of his providing miracles on their behalf. Such was the lot of Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum.¹⁰⁶²

Gundry¹⁰⁶³ while confirming that Mark is not recording that Jesus was powerless or that he had tried but failed, writes that Jesus is refusing to be a sensation, though this misses the significant issue relating to faith and is not supported elsewhere in situations where Jesus does perform miracles even though they do cause a sensation. The crucial element in the provision of miracles is the presence or absence of faith and it is the identification of that faith that is of significance.¹⁰⁶⁴

Others, however, have understood this passage to imply that Jesus needed an expression of faith on the part of those present as a necessary complement to the activation of his healing power, the lack of that faith resulting in an inability on his part to minister effectively though his desire was that he should.¹⁰⁶⁵

However, the Gospels elsewhere do not suggest this. Fridrichsen¹⁰⁶⁶ believes the paucity of miracles was because the people did not request them, stating, "Jesus exercised his supernatural power only when his help was requested or

¹⁰⁶² Matt. 11:20-24; Lk. 10:13-15.

¹⁰⁶³ Mark, 299.

¹⁰⁶⁴ Coleman (P., Go and do likewise, Chichester: New Wine Press (1990) 163) inexplicably writes, "We can have faith for the healing of one disease or problem but not another. Cancer or rheumatoid disease, deafness or blindness are no problem for me, but the common cold or flu is!"

¹⁰⁶⁵ cf. Scott, Healing..., 35; Galipeau, Transforming..., 12; Dunn, Jesus..., 75; Carlson, "A Healing...", 27.

¹⁰⁶⁶ The Problem..., 79f.

sought after". However, there were occasions when Jesus took the initiative and provided healing.¹⁰⁶⁷

Jesus needed nothing to activate his power. Theirs was not a failure to recognise and acknowledge his capacity to heal but rather an unwillingness "to accept him as anything more than the son of the carpenter".¹⁰⁶⁸ The absence of faith in Jesus is to be understood in the context of their desire to destroy him. This was blatant rejection of his person and mission and does not substantiate the development of a theory that faith may be increased in order to receive a proportionately induced restoration.¹⁰⁶⁹ Rightly, Held¹⁰⁷⁰ rejects the idea that the healing can be understood as a reward for faith.

Hurding¹⁰⁷¹ states, "his power over disease, and not individual faith, is the arbiter of recovery". Similarly, Richardson¹⁰⁷² comments, "The Gospels nowhere suggest that Jesus could not have worked a miracle if the belief that a cure would be effected had been lacking; they stress the necessity of faith, but it is the faith which illuminates the inner meaning of the miracle without which Jesus does not consider it to be fitting to accomplish the healing".

¹⁰⁶⁷ Matt. 8:14; 12:9; Jn. 5:6.

¹⁰⁶⁸ Dickinson, God..., 106; cf. Melinsky, Healing..., 23; Knapp, S.A., "He could do no mighty deed there...Mark 6:1-6", Proceedings, 12 (1992) 155-166; Dunn, R., Will God heal me?, Eastbourne:Kingsway (1997) 142.

¹⁰⁶⁹ see Hagin earlier.

¹⁰⁷⁰ "Matthew...", 278f.

¹⁰⁷¹ "Healing", 200; cf. Van der Loos, The Miracles..., 263; Fridrichsen, The Problem..., 79; Held, "Matthew...", 277; Goldingay, Signs..., 17.

¹⁰⁷² The Miracle..., 63.

It is to be remembered that although faith is often mentioned in the context of the healings of Jesus,¹⁰⁷³ there are occasions when faith is not mentioned.¹⁰⁷⁴ Go¹⁰⁷⁵ rightly concludes, "If faith were lacking in even one example, then faith cannot be said to be a requirement for healing".

Why does Luke tell the story?

The rejection of Jesus, only specifically described as taking place in Nazareth in Luke, is placed at the commencement of his Galilean ministry, immediately after his confrontation with the Devil in the wilderness. It is also placed alone by Luke (vs. 18f) in the wider context of the prophecy recorded in Isaiah 61:1f that is the subject of a discourse given by Jesus in the synagogue in which he identifies his mission.¹⁰⁷⁶ His person having been recognised by the Devil, Jesus formally introduces his mission to the Jews. On the cosmic level, Jesus is accurately identified by the one whose work he came to destroy; on earth, he is rejected by those he came to save. While the Devil seeks to tempt him and then leaves him, Jesus leaves the people for they seek to kill him.

In response to their wonder (4:22), presented more markedly than both Matthew and Mark, Jesus confronts their implied rejection (4:23f), challenges their right to God's provision as Jews (4:25-28) and, despite their desire to

¹⁰⁷³ Matt. 8:5-13; 9:1-8, 20ff; 27-31; 15:22-28; 17:14-21; Lk. 7:11-19; Jn. 11:1-46.

¹⁰⁷⁴ Matt. 12:10-13; Mk. 1:22ff; Lk. 13:10-17; 14:1-6; 22:50f; Jn. 5:1-16.

¹⁰⁷⁵ "Healing...", 58.

¹⁰⁷⁶ His role of offering sight, mentioned in the sermon, is viewed by Nolland (Luke, 1. 197) as being metaphorical and literal although Marshall (Luke, 184) prefers a metaphorical interpretation only.

destroy him, walks safely through their midst (4:29f). Although it is probable that this record is of the same occasion as those recorded in Matthew and Mark, Luke offers a different context. In so doing, he presents the Jews as being forced to make a decision concerning Jesus and reveals that their decision is not just to reject him but to destroy him. The unbelief on their part is thus viewed not simply as uncertainty regarding his claims. Instead, it is described as a mindset that has been determined and that is prepared to initiate the death of the one rejected. This is an active, malevolent unbelief. In particular, their rejection of him is based on his announcement that it is the will of God that the message of salvation be presented to the Gentiles as well as to the Jews. His ministry is universal; they view the ministry of Messiah as more aptly localised to the Jews.

It is this context of unbelief that clarifies the reason for Jesus' limited ministry in their community, Luke following it with a record of restoration that occurred in Capernaum (4:31-37). However, on this occasion, a positive testimony is recorded, though coming from an unclean spirit. In marked contrast to the people of Nazareth who had seen him develop from childhood and yet still rejected him, the people of Capernaum marvel at his authoritative teaching (4:31) and power (4:36). Instead of Jesus going away from the people, as at Nazareth, positive reports concerning him go out from Capernaum (4:31).

Thus the incident referred to by each Synoptist may not be used simplistically to indicate that lack of faith restricts Jesus. Rather, Jesus is presented as

choosing not to heal because of an absence of faith. Secondly, the identity of that unbelief is to be equated with rejection, not doubt; unwillingness to accept him, not uncertainty about him; determination to oppose him, not anxiety as to whether he would heal them. These accounts affirm the lesson that for Jesus, the healings act as opportunities for people to demonstrate their willingness to acknowledge his healing authority and all that which it indicates.

Obedience

(See also Matthew 7:21-23; 8:2-4//s; 12:43-45//s)

As has been indicated, in each of the Gospels, it is that which follows the healing that is often more important than the healing. This is particularly clear in Matthew. Although crowds were attracted to Jesus in order that he might heal them (4:24ff), Matthew immediately records Jesus teaching them the rubrics of discipleship (5:1ff).¹⁰⁷⁷ Obedience figures as an important element in the healing miracles.¹⁰⁷⁸ The healings provide models for future believers who are encouraged to learn from those healed especially where the latter are described as obeying the one who had restored them.

This motif of obedience is also located in the healing of Peter's mother in law.¹⁰⁷⁹ Each Synoptic account refers to the aftermath of the healing in which the woman serves them, Matthew deliberately restricting the service to Jesus,

¹⁰⁷⁷ cf. Gatzweiler, K., "Les récits de miracles dans l'Evangile selon saint Matthieu", L'Evangile selon Matthieu, (ed.) Didier, M., Gembloux:Duculot (1972) 214.

¹⁰⁷⁸ 8:4, 13, 15, 18-22, 27, 32; 9:6, 12.

¹⁰⁷⁹ Mt. 8:14ff/Mk. 1:29ff/Lk. 4:38ff.

suggestive of his unique status.¹⁰⁸⁰ At the same time, the lack of mention of prior faith but the subsequent service reflects discipleship.¹⁰⁸¹ The healing thus acts as a paradigmatic model for future believers who are encouraged to follow the examples of the disciples, who intercede on behalf of a needy person presenting her to Jesus, and of the woman who offers a model of ideal discipleship in offering immediate service. He bears such authority that prompt service is the appropriate response.

This motif is also noticeable in Mark. Mark 8:22-26¹⁰⁸² provides the record of Jesus healing a blind man in two stages. Jesus leads the man away from the people, on this occasion out of the village.¹⁰⁸³ The man is being encouraged to place his trust in Jesus at the commencement of their relationship. This will develop in the story.

This is the only occasion in the healing accounts in the New Testament in which a healing act is only partially effected and the reason for that probably resides in the arrangement by Mark of adjacent narratives. Insofar as the author does not expand on the significance of this unique two part healing, it is important to analyse the context. Prior to this narrative, Mark records a

¹⁰⁸⁰ 8:15.

¹⁰⁸¹ cf. Patte, Matthew, 116; Latourelle, The Miracles..., 81. Gundry, (Mark, 91) views the service offered simply as proof of the healing; cf. Heil (The Gospel..., 50; Ryrie (C.C., "An Act of Divine Healing", BS, 113 (Oct. 1956) 359f) suggests that it proves she has been reinstated to her familial position.

¹⁰⁸² For discussion of the authenticity of the passage, see Johnson, J.E., "Mark 8:22-26: The Blind Man from Bethsaida", NTS, 25 (1979) 370-375; Crossan (The Historical..., 325) views it as an example of a magical act.

¹⁰⁸³ Harper (Healings..., 89) unnecessarily assumes it was to take "him away from this unbelieving environment".

misunderstanding by the disciples concerning a statement by Jesus leading him to ask them, "Having eyes do you not see...Do you not yet understand?" (8:14-21).¹⁰⁸⁴ Following the miracle, he records the conversation between Jesus and his disciples concerning their understanding as to his identity. In response to Jesus' question, "Who do men say that I am?", they provide answers; when he asks them for their own perception, Peter responds, "You are the Christ" (8:27ff). However, although Peter provides an accurate response, it is soon clear that he, as well as the other disciples, do not understand the implications of Jesus' messiahship.¹⁰⁸⁵ Although his identification is correct, the revelation has not been initiated by him (Matt. 16:17) and the following verses reveal Jesus strongly rebuking him for acting as the instrument of Satan (8:33). His revelation of Jesus is, at best, partial; as yet, he and the other disciples are unable to perceive the true mission of Jesus. They are also still partially sighted (9:10, 32, 38).

Mark records the healing of the blind man as a symbolic presentation of the limited perception of Peter and the disciples¹⁰⁸⁶ who will only come to a full realisation of the person of Jesus after further ministry from him.¹⁰⁸⁷ As with the

¹⁰⁸⁴ Parallel words and concepts in the passage under consideration and those preceding and following it may also be of value in establishing a link...the concept of privacy (23, 27), secrecy (26, 30), the words "ask" (23, 27, 29), "see" (18, 23, 24), "eyes" (18, 25), "people" (24, 27).

¹⁰⁸⁵ 9:32; 10:32ff.

¹⁰⁸⁶ cf. Myers, *Binding...*, 240f; Johnson, "Mark 8...", 383; Schnackenburg, *Jesus...*, 27; Richardson, *The Miracle...*, 84, 86.

¹⁰⁸⁷ contra Gundry, *Mark*, 421f; however, Johnson ("Mark 8...", 370-379) suggests this is probably why Matthew and Luke omit the passage from their accounts for the relationship between this and the blindness of the disciples was not useful to their purposes.

blind man, full restoration will occur but this will not be immediate and not at Caesarea Philippi. As such, all would-be disciples can take comfort that even the disciples initially failed to understand fully but the promise to them and future immature believers is that complete comprehension would be afforded to them.¹⁰⁸⁸ The narrative teaches that the route to following Jesus is one of increasingly accurate perception.¹⁰⁸⁹ The important lesson articulated by Mark is that obedience is most important on the journey. Thus, Peter is rebuked for disagreeing with Jesus (8:33), the mark of discipleship is specified as being obedience (8:34) and the word of the Father is that they should listen to Jesus (9:7). To extrapolate from this that gradual healings have a divine precedent is faulty. Nevertheless, as has been noted, many Pentecostals and Hagin, in particular, maintain this belief.

Except on one occasion, already discussed, the healings of Jesus were immediate.¹⁰⁹⁰ Nevertheless, MacNutt uses this exception as a precedent for the believer, writing, “even Jesus had to pray for a person twice”.¹⁰⁹¹ Gradual healings are increasingly accepted as the norm by many Pentecostal and Charismatic Christians.¹⁰⁹² Harper,¹⁰⁹³ in order to maintain a relationship

¹⁰⁸⁸ cf. Johnson, “Mark 8...”, 383; Wheatley-Irving, L., “The Miracles of the Messiah and Peter’s Confession (Mark 7:31-9:1)”, Proceedings, 12 (1992) 145-153.

¹⁰⁸⁹ Hogan (Healing..., 265) suggests it may “serve to encourage the disciples not to give up attempts to heal when such healings do not occur immediately” though this is an insubstantial theory.

¹⁰⁹⁰ egs. Matt. 8:1-4//s; Mk. 2:12; 5:29, 42; 7:35; 10:52.

¹⁰⁹¹ Power..., 29

¹⁰⁹² Heron, Praying... xii, 64f; Blue, Authority..., 104; Lucas, J.R., “Foundations for the Healing Ministry in the Uniting Church in Australia”, unpubl. D.Min., Fuller Theological Seminary (1992) 141; Scott, Healing..., 53; Hinn, Lord..., 105; Huggett, Healing..., 121; Wagner, How to..., 224; Urquhart, The Truth..., 154; MacNutt, F., The Power to Heal, Notre Dame: Ave Maria Press (1977) 30ff, 45,

between Jesus' healings and those today in the Church, the latter of which are rarely instantaneous, writes of those whom Jesus healed, "some may have needed convalescence, others may have experienced a gradual healing". However, no evidence is offered and the healing narratives suggest otherwise.

Macnutt¹⁰⁹⁴ writes, "*usually* people are not completely healed by prayer, but they are *improved*". Huggett¹⁰⁹⁵ notes, "Things may have to get worse before they get better...it may sometimes take time for bad things to come to the surface and leave us", further suggesting that, "Perhaps the Lord heals in stages because it would be too much of a shock to the system otherwise".¹⁰⁹⁶ Pearson¹⁰⁹⁷ suggests that this is the basis for the necessity for perseverance in prayer for the sick. These suggestions are speculative, unconvincing and not reflected in the ministry of Jesus.

Turner¹⁰⁹⁸ argues that agnosticism is the preferable position given that "We simply do not know that all Jesus' miracles were instantaneous". This is, of course, an argument based on silence but more particularly, is not supported by the fact that, of those healings that are recorded, the healings were instantaneous or at least, occurred very quickly.¹⁰⁹⁹

57-62 .

¹⁰⁹³ The Healings..., 108.

¹⁰⁹⁴ The Power..., 27.

¹⁰⁹⁵ Healing..., 133.

¹⁰⁹⁶ *ibid*, 128.

¹⁰⁹⁷ Pearson, M., Christian Healing, London:HS (1996) 60.

¹⁰⁹⁸ Turner, M., The Holy Spirit and Spiritual Gifts, Exeter:Paternoster Press (1996) 337.

¹⁰⁹⁹ Mk. 1:42; 2:12; 5:29, 42; 7:35; 8:22-25; 10:52; Lk. 17:11-19; Jn. 9:2-7 (Num. 16:31; Dan. 4:33; b. Taan. 23a; b Ber. 34b).

The above information indicates a major contrast between Jesus' healing ministry and that of contemporary believers.

Conclusion

The research thus far has determined that the healing narratives are to be viewed as important vehicles presenting important lessons for the followers of Jesus, including trust and obedience. More broadly, the above research has demonstrated that the healing accounts in the Gospels indicate that the motivation of Jesus in effecting healing was determined by two main issues, namely, the establishing of aspects relating to himself and to the lifestyle of his followers. Thus, his healing ministry is to be understood in the specific context of his Messianic, and therefore unique, mission of establishing his divine authority, reinstating the outcast within society whilst also providing a relationship with God, initiating the Kingdom and granting opportunities for belief that would potentially result in commitment to himself sufficient to enable entrance into eternal life. Also, two of the lessons presented to would-be disciples related to the importance of faith and obedience. As such, the healing miracles are to be recognised as both constituting divine healing and providing an integrally important pedagogical function. As such, they reveal the uniqueness of Jesus' healing ministry that by definition cannot be emulated.

THE COMMISSIONS OF JESUS AND THE

ROLE OF THE SPIRIT

Introduction

The issues analysed thus far are to be borne in mind when considering claims that Jesus acted as a model to be emulated with regard to healing in the Gospels. Instead, it has been argued that Jesus is presented by the Gospel authors as ministering distinctively and uniquely.

Attempts have been made to indicate that Jesus' healings were not as unique as the textual evidence suggests. Crossan¹¹⁰⁰ locates parallels with magic in Jesus' ministry and concludes that he was a magician. However, although magic was pervasive throughout the era in which Jesus lived,¹¹⁰¹ there is insufficient evidence to prove that he functioned as a magician.¹¹⁰² His lifestyle

¹¹⁰⁰ The Historical..., 305.

¹¹⁰¹ b. San. 17a; Baba Mezia 107b state that no one may be a member of the Sanhedrin without a knowledge of sorcery (see also Tob. 6:1-8, 8:2f, 11:7-14; Ant. 8:46-48; b. Shab. 66b, 129b); cf. Goldin, J., "The Magic of Magic and Superstition", (115-148); Achtemeier, P.J., "Jesus and the Disciples as Miracle Workers in the Apocryphal New Testament", (152-156) Aspects of Religious Propaganda in Judaism and Early Christianity, (ed.) Fiorenza, E.S., Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press (1976); Mills (M.E., Human Agents of Cosmic Power, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press (1990) 126) describes magic as "the harnessing of cosmic forces" and in that light appropriate as a description of the activity of the ancient Jews (cf. 230-235); Cryer (F.H., Divination in Ancient Israel and its Near Eastern Environment, Sheffield: JSOT (1994)) after providing a socio-historical investigation of magic in ancient Israelite society concludes "ancient Israel was a 'magic society' like those around her" (324);

¹¹⁰² cf. Dunn, Jesus..., 380; Kee, Miracle..., 214f; contra Crossan, The Historical...,

and beliefs need to be borne in mind when identifying any link with magic.¹¹⁰³ Indeed, early Church writers sought to establish that Jesus was not a magician¹¹⁰⁴ and the Gospels do not present him as such, Kee¹¹⁰⁵ contrasting miracle and magic noting, "Miracle embodies the claim that healing can be accomplished through appeal to... the gods...magic is a technique...by which a desired end is achieved", on the basis of which he later claims there were no magical elements in Jesus' actions.¹¹⁰⁶

More fundamentally, Garrett¹¹⁰⁷ emphasises the difficulty of defining magic, concluding that the great variance in conclusions of those seeking to decide if Jesus' actions were magical is, "an unproductive and unsatisfying endeavour".¹¹⁰⁸ What is clear is that Jesus' healings were presented as messages to instruct rather than as magical acts to intrigue. His healings were sufficiently different to other healers to demonstrate the distinctiveness of his ministry.

305-310; Blackburn, "The Miracles...", 372-389; Wright (Jesus..., 190) claims that it is only appropriate to describe Jesus as a magician if that is a term used to describe someone who functions without official sanction.

¹¹⁰³ cf. Vogtle, "The Miracles...", 98-101.

¹¹⁰⁴ Justin, Apol. 2.6; Dial. Trypho, 69, 85; Irenaeus, Adv. Haer., 2.31.2; 3.31.2; 3.32.3ff; Origen, Contra Celsum, 1.6, 68; 2.32, 44, 48, 50f; 4.32; 6.40; Arnobius, Adv. Nat., 1.43, 44, 48, 50; Lactantius, Div. Inst., 4.15.9.

¹¹⁰⁵ Medicine..., 3; cf. Kern-Ulmer, B., "The Depiction of Magic in Rabbinic Texts: The Rabbinic and the Greek Concept of Magic", JSJ, 27.3 (1996) 290.

¹¹⁰⁶ Medicine..., 79, 114; cf. Wright, Jesus..., 190; Dowd, Prayer..., 138-145; contra Hull, J.M., Hellenistic Magic and the Synoptic Tradition, London:SCM (1974) 143ff.

¹¹⁰⁷ The Demise..., 4, 23-36, 108; cf. Cryer, Divination..., 42-95; Kee (Medicine..., 114, 126) views the ancient magician as being deliberately manipulative and coercive; Blythin (I., "Magic and Methodology", Numen, 17/18 (1969/1970) 45) rejects the view that magic is manipulative.

¹¹⁰⁸ The Demise..., 31; this issue has been explored elsewhere in "An Exegesis of James 5:13-18", unpubl. M. Phil., CNAA/London Bible College (1991) 69-74.

The perspective of the Synoptists is that Jesus is uniquely phenomenal. Any followers will, by definition, function at best only as a limited imitation. He has come in fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy, acts as Messiah, forgives sins, establishes the Kingdom of God, incorporates outcasts into society, breaking traditional taboos, demonstrates his authority over the Law and expects commitment and obedience of his followers, his healings demonstrating and confirming the above aspects. They are provided to lead to faith in him.

Those who advocate that Jesus has delegated his authority to his followers to function as he did¹¹⁰⁹ must take into consideration the above distinctives as well as be cognisant of the dissimilarities between the healing ministries of Jesus and contemporary believers.

Others, besides Classical Pentecostalism, Hagin and Wimber, are reticent to deny this apparent delegated authority, despite the marked contrast between the methods, purposes and success of Jesus and that of contemporary believers. MacNutt¹¹¹⁰ writes, "Healing is meant to be as ordinary, as frequent, as it was when Jesus walked through the crowds every day in the glaring hot sun of Galilee". Cerullo interprets John 5:21, 26 and 1 Corinthians 15:45 as evidence that Christ's healing powers have been transferred to believers.¹¹¹¹

¹¹⁰⁹ cf. Huggett, "A Ministry...", 138-141; Blue, Authority..., 17; Heron, Praying..., 1; Harper, The Healings..., 174; Cerullo, M., You can know how to defeat Satan, Hemel Hempstead:MCWE (1991) 208; Ruthven, J., On the Cessation of the Charismatic: The Protestant Polemic on Postbiblical Miracles, JPTS 3, Sheffield:Sheffield Academic Press (1993) 118; Wilkinson, P., "Anointing of the Sick", HW, 18 (Apr/June 1995) 2; Richards, The Question..., 43; Twelftree, Christ..., 99f; Heil, The Gospel..., 136; Wagner, How..., 134; Davies and Allison, Matthew, 415; MacNutt, Healing, 80.

¹¹¹⁰ MacNutt, The Prayer..., 20.

¹¹¹¹ Christ..., 47,61.

Indeed, he claims, "WE HAVE RECEIVED THE SAME ANOINTING TO DO THE SAME WORKS AS JESUS!".¹¹¹² Of Mark 16:17, he writes, 'That promise was not just for that time...it is for every time and for every believer in him'.¹¹¹³ He claims that Jesus 'became exactly as you and I are', stating that Jesus informed him by revelation, 'I overcame the Devil...but I became like you so that I could show you I overcame the Devil...Because I overcame, you too can have the same ability; you too can overcome'.¹¹¹⁴ The nature of this latter comment is questionable and the suggestion that Jesus became a man in order to reveal how he overcame the Devil lacks biblical support.

Peddie¹¹¹⁵ arbitrarily argues that the reason why healings are less frequent than in the ministry of Jesus is that "We are inferior to Jesus...A consequence of our inferiority is that God has to make up in time what we lack in spiritual qualifications". This apparently results from a lack of preparedness or attempting to minister "beyond our present level of spiritual growth".¹¹¹⁶

However, given that the believer is supposed to have the ability to function as did Jesus, there is no reason why the healing should not be achieved since the power belongs to God; the suggested reasons for the impeding of God's power receive no biblical substantiation.

¹¹¹² "God has spoken...", 39 (capitals his); cf. Proof..., p. 16; You can know..., 208.

¹¹¹³ Cerullo, M., Two Men from Eden, San Diego:MCWE (1977) 120.

¹¹¹⁴ Israel..., vol. 4.

¹¹¹⁵ Peddie, J.C., The Forgotten Talent, London:Fontana (1966) 58; cf. MacNutt, The Power..., 45; "The Mystery why some are healed and others are not", HW, 7 (July/Sept. 1992) 11.

¹¹¹⁶ The Forgotten..., 11.

Similarly, MacNutt describes himself as “a wounded healer” by which he appears to mean that since he is not God, “there is an element of more or less power, more or less authority in me...so that the effect of my prayer on the sickness may not completely dispel the sickness”.¹¹¹⁷ Thus, referring to Matthew 17:19f, he suggests that it is possible that Christians may lack “the life and spiritual power to perform the healings that God truly wants us to perform”.¹¹¹⁸ This results in him writing, “It takes much more healing power to pray for a missing section of bone to grow than for a headache to disappear”.¹¹¹⁹ However, there is no reference to a gradation of healing power in the New Testament. It is also questionable that such a sliding scale of power is a valid grid for healing praxis, especially for those who apparently have the authority to replicate the healing ministry of Jesus. He states, “because the power of God is coming through us it is often limited. The healer is the blockage”.¹¹²⁰ There is no mention of these concepts in the teaching of Jesus, or the New Testament as a whole, with regard to healing. If power to heal was delegated by Jesus to his followers, but it was impeded by the very conduit through whom it flowed, it would have been anticipated that such an issue would have been commented on, given that it significantly qualifies the value of the apparent empowerment to heal. Nowhere in the Biblical text is a representative of God, who has been authorised to heal, simultaneously the blockage of that healing. This perception however, is probably articulated in response to the limited success rate of contemporary healing. At the same

¹¹¹⁷ The Power..., 33.

¹¹¹⁸ *ibid*, 143f.

¹¹¹⁹ *ibid*, 97 (also 31-33, 45, 98).

¹¹²⁰ quoted by England, “Anointed...”, 6.

time, it provides an explanation that keeps intact the apparent promise to the believer of the healing power of Jesus, albeit at the expense of significantly undermining the value of the promise.

Commissions to the Twelve and the Seventy

It is now appropriate to offer a limited consideration of the relevant passages in which Jesus commissions and empowers his disciples concerning the miraculous in order to determine whether they may be applied to other believers.¹¹²¹ It is true that Jesus anticipated a continuing healing ministry in the Church after his resurrection. It is probable that the commissions of Jesus were preserved in order to remind the Apostles and instruct the believers concerning the delegated authority specifically granted to the Apostles, an authority that the former¹¹²² and the latter¹¹²³ had been prone to overlook. It is also true that although the healings are recorded as mainly having occurred at the hands of the Apostles, in particular Peter and Paul, healings resulted through Philip, Stephen and Ananias.¹¹²⁴ However, the latter healings were of

¹¹²¹ Many hold to a similar view resulting the belief that the commission by Jesus to the disciples is also to all believers (Blue, Authority..., 17; Wagner, C.P., "Your worldview makes a difference", CL, (August 1985) 62; Williams, D., Signs and Wonders and the Kingdom of God, Ann Arbor: Vine (1989) 123; MacNutt, Healing, 80; Brown, Israel's..., 229); however, hermeneutic reasons for this apparently arbitrary extension are not offered; neither are the distinctions in practice seriously examined or explained.

¹¹²² Lk. 9:1, 40.

¹¹²³ 1 Cor. 4:ff; 9:3; 2 Cor. 2:5; Gal. 1:6ff.

¹¹²⁴ Witherington (B. III., "Salvation and Health in Christian Antiquity: The Soteriology of Luke-Acts in its First Century Setting", Witness the Gospel. The Theology of Acts, (eds.) Marshall, I.H., Peterson, D., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans (1998) 164) views the healings in Acts as not being "an absolutely necessary part

a different genre to those of Jesus, given the particular setting of his ministry in initiating the Kingdom and proclaiming salvation through himself.

It is significant to note that none of the healings of the disciples are recorded in the Gospels. If it was of major importance to establish a paradigmatic platform for all the followers of Jesus, it would be expected that at least some would be recorded. At the same time, each Evangelist records the inability of the disciples to heal the epileptic boy.¹¹²⁵ The Gospel writers appear determined to identify Jesus as the central figure in healing, not the disciples. Their delegated authority is not explored in actuality; the centrality of Jesus is maintained. Similarly, it is to be noticed that none of the Johannine signs are attributed to the Disciples. The latter are presented as witnesses of those signs; they do not "rival Jesus' role as the God - sent Messiah".¹¹²⁶

To extrapolate from the records of the healings of Jesus that since he healed, so can all his followers, overlooks the importance of his healings as part of his Messiahship, a status unique to him. Attention is drawn to Luke 7:22 which provides a response to the question of John the Baptist concerning the identity of Jesus. The healings of Jesus mentioned in the response are demonstrable evidences of his Messianic status. This coupled with the presentation of his

or benefit of sharing the Gospel in the ancient world". He partially bases this on the fact that Luke never uses the word "σωτηρ" and cognate nouns to describe physical healings, reserving them for soteriological references. However, the verbal cognates are regularly used in physical restorations and this severely undermines his case.

¹¹²⁵ Mt. 17:14-21; Mk. 9:14-27; Lk. 9:37-43.

¹¹²⁶ Kostenberger, The Missions..., 170.

ministry in Luke 4:18f indicates the uniquely phenomenological nature of his person and mission. Since Jesus' role as healer was unique, it is, by definition, unrepeatable.

The readers of the Gospels are offered guidelines that allow them to approach the Son of God on the same basis as those recorded in the Gospels.

Paraenetically, the stories offer hope in that the same Jesus who heard the requests of people in his lifetime can listen to their requests, since they also live in a context of faith in him. Similarly, rather than view charismatic activity, including healing, as the standard description of the early Church, it is more appropriate to identify it as functioning in the salvific power of Jesus in terms of discipleship and spiritual growth.

Matthew 10:1, 8//Mark 6:7, 13 (3:15)//Luke 9:1, 2, 6;

10:9; Matthew 28:19f

This commission is to the Twelve and comprises the granting of authority over demons and the power to heal diseases. The description of the ministry of Jesus to the sick in Matthew 9:35 is identical to the commission to the disciples in their ministry to the sick, as recorded in 10:1, the implication being that what their Master has done, they are to do likewise.¹¹²⁷

¹¹²⁷ cf. O'Toole, R.F., "Parallels between Jesus and His Disciples in Luke-Acts: A Further Study", BZ, 27 (1983) 195-212.

Matthew records Jesus' commissioning the disciples to engage in a ministry of healing in the context of preaching the Kingdom and that only to Jews (10:6f); Mark also specifies that they were sent out to preach (6:12), while Luke records them having been sent out to preach the Kingdom and to heal (9:2). Each author thus places the activities in the framework of preaching, Matthew and Luke clarifying that the preaching relates to the Kingdom. The anointing of the sick with oil is unique to Mark in the Synoptics only being mentioned elsewhere in the New Testament in a probable context of supernatural healing in James 5:14 though Luke 10:33 records the medical use of oil.

It is not to be assumed, however, that because this commission is placed upon the Twelve, it is necessarily also to be undertaken by the later Church.

Indeed, the commission in Matthew 10:8//s is located in the context of a number of instructions for evangelism that have relevance only for the Twelve, though principles may be gleaned and applied to other contexts and eras. If it does relate to today, there is a marked imbalance and infrequency concerning the occurrence of resurrections. Similarly, it is noted that some of the injunctions of Jesus are ignored by believers today including his commission that they should take very limited possessions and only go to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel".

The commissioning of the Seventy¹¹²⁸ (Lk. 10:9) has similarities with the commission to the Twelve, though the debriefing of the former suggests a more

¹¹²⁸ The number may be a reference to the Gentile nations (Gen. 10:2-31) or the helpers of Moses (Num. 11:16-25) though Garrett (The Demise..., 47f) prefers a

closely circumscribed ministry. It appears that the commission to the Seventy was limited to that particular commission; their role not being mentioned thereafter. MacNutt¹¹²⁹ suggests, "The seventy two seems to stand for ordinary people like us", though there is no evidence for this in the text.

Most importantly, in Jesus' final commission to the eleven disciples (Mt. 28:19f; Lk. 24:46-49; Jn. 20:21-23; 21:15-19 (excluding Mark 16:17 which is contained in the disputed longer ending of Mark) Acts 1:8), healing is not specifically referred to.¹¹³⁰ Authority is mentioned but it is located in a statement in which Jesus affirms that all authority belongs to him (Mt. 28:18); he maintains centre stage again. Significantly, the final words of Jesus to the disciples recorded by Matthew and Luke include references to preaching but not to healing.

Mark 16:17-20

This passage records that miraculous signs are to accompany those that believe; they will heal the sick as a result of the laying on of hands and; these signs are recorded as occurring in order to confirm the message preached.

The validity of the inclusion of these verses as authentic elements in Mark is

link with Num. 11:16-25, interpreting the inclusion here as a foreshadowing of the period of the Church; see Metzger (B.M., "Seventy or seventy two disciples?" *NTS*, 5.4 (1958/59) 299-306) for further explanations.

¹¹²⁹ The Prayer..., 27.

¹¹³⁰ Blomberg ("Healing", 299-307) suggests, "Frequently, healings occur where there is little or no faith in order to try to instil belief in Jesus as the Son of God...once that faith has developed, healings may be less necessary"; Dunn (*Jesus...*, 74) comments on the "almost total absence of the post-Easter demand for faith" which indicates "that we have reflected here a typical attitude of Jesus".

important to a discussion of their contents though this has been carried out in depth elsewhere.¹¹³¹ The fact that signs confirmed the preaching of the Gospel and occurred at the hands of believers (mainly Peter and Paul) is recorded in the book of Acts.¹¹³² Thus, even if they are authentic, they simply indicate Jesus' belief that miracles of healing would continue to occur in the future. That which may not be deduced is that they are meant to indicate an emulation of Jesus' ministry. Jesus' healing ministry is not presented as a model for future healing ministries.¹¹³³ His ministry was an inimitable phenomenon, not intended to be a paradigm; his healings were achieved with purposes uniquely relevant to his ministry of initiating the Kingdom.

John 14:12-14

The above comments need to be considered in the light of John 14:12-14, in which Jesus promises that the works he has performed will be achieved to a greater degree by those who believe in him. The clarification of "greater works" has been the cause of some discussion. The reason for the works being described as "greater" is because Jesus is to return to the Father. In and because of his absence, the believer will have the opportunity to perform

¹¹³¹ cf. Hooker, Mark, 391ff; Lane, Mark, 601ff; Gundry, Mark, 1009ff; Cranfield, Mark, 470ff; Taylor, Mark, 612f, all of whom conclude that they are non-Markan.

¹¹³² 2:43; 5:15f; 6:8; 8:7; 9:18, 34, 36-41; 13:11f; 14:3, 8-10; 19:10f; 20:9f; 28:8f.

¹¹³³ cf. Goldingay, Signs..., 17, 180; Brown, That you..., 192; Hurding, "Healing", 215; Wacker, "Wimber...", 16f; Gundry, Matthew, 301; Brown, "The Other...", 29.

greater works. The Church that follows Jesus has the privilege of bringing his mission to fruition.¹¹³⁴

Many Pentecostals, those representing the Faith Movement and those identifying themselves with the Signs and Wonders Movement understand this in terms of miracles.¹¹³⁵

Smedes¹¹³⁶ suggests that the meaning relates to the believers being able to influence more people than Jesus was able to, suggesting the interpretation therefore of "greater in effect". Witherington¹¹³⁷ views its fulfilment in the greater evangelisation achieved by the followers of Jesus. Similarly, May¹¹³⁸ refers the text not to the miracles mentioned in verse 11, but the Father's work referred to in verse 10..."gospel work, reconciling work". He focuses attention on the fact that believers and Jesus are sent as representatives of the Father (20:21).

However, the perspective of May that "works" in verse 10 refers to the preaching of the Gospel is not reflected in the text itself. The plural "works" is an inappropriate way to express the preaching of the Gospel and more clearly

¹¹³⁴ Bultmann (John, 610) rejects the views that it refers to a greater geographical area than Jesus' ministry, or that it refers to a greater success than that enjoyed by Jesus or that it describes greater numbers of miracles than those achieved by Jesus.

¹¹³⁵ cf. Wagner, How..., 130.

¹¹³⁶ Ministry..., 21f; cf. Morris, John, 646.

¹¹³⁷ John's..., 250; cf. Barrett, John, 460.

¹¹³⁸ May, P., "Focusing on the eternal", Signs..., (ed.) Goldingay, 41; cf. Lucas, E., "The significance of Jesus' healing ministry", Christian Healing, London:Lynx (1997) 95.

relates to the miracles of Jesus, as also noted in verse 11 (cf. 9:4). The use of the same term in verse 12, first referring to the same works mentioned in verse 11 as being achieved by Jesus and secondly as potential realities in the experience of the disciples, suggests a continuation of meaning. The verses following present a promise of Jesus in response to prayer but the context is not of evangelisation but more probably, relating to the achievement of those works. The progression is thus:

The works of Jesus are valid proofs of the unity between Jesus and the Father (v. 11).

The same quality of works is possible through those who believe (v. 12a).

Even greater works are available because Jesus is going to the Father (v. 12b)

However, the greatness of these works is not in their numbers or spectacular nature. Similarly, Carson¹¹³⁹ rejects the view that it simply refers to believers having the capacity of achieving numerically greater works than Jesus, writing, "It cannot simply mean more works...since there are perfectly good Greek ways of saying 'more', and since in any case the meaning would then be unbearably trite". Analogously, to suggest that believers will be able to achieve greater works in terms of the dramatic impact caused by even more impossible scenarios than the healings or resurrections of Jesus is an unlikely interpretation of the text.¹¹⁴⁰

¹¹³⁹ John, 495; cf. Beasley-Murray, John, 254; contra Lindars, John, 475.

¹¹⁴⁰ cf. Carson, John, 495; Beasley-Murray, John, 254; Witherington, John's..., 250.

It is not that greater power is available to believers than was available to Jesus or that greater power derives from the Spirit than through Jesus. The significance of the promise is not that works or more works or greater works will be achieved by believers, but that a source for such an authoritative power will be granted to the believers so that even when Jesus has ascended, the purposes of God will still be made manifest through ordinary men and women because they will be living in the age of the Spirit.¹¹⁴¹ The reference to the Spirit (vs. 15ff) indicates that the presence of the Spirit is the distinguishing feature in this promise. Though the context of the verse is related to works, the perception that a new age is also anticipated in which they will be achieved as a result of the resources of the Holy Spirit is worth further investigation.

Thus, the promise is to be understood as a reflection of the fact that the power of the Spirit is to be distributed through many more channels than the one person, Jesus. Thus, the promise in verse 17 is that the Spirit “will remain in you all”, the Church being the community of the Spirit in which he will dwell (Rom. 8:15f; 1 Cor. 3:16f, 6:18f) and through whom he will minister (Acts 1:8, 2:17f; 1 Cor. 2:4).

Their greatness is best understood in terms of the new context in which they are achieved. Rather than it be understood as referring to more miracles in raw numbers or superior miracles, it is more appropriate to view it as referring to the new era in which they are to be achieved.¹¹⁴² Since believers now

¹¹⁴¹ cf. Turner, The Holy..., 338.

¹¹⁴² cf. Kostenberger, The Missions..., 172; Schnackenburg, John, 3.72.

belong to the era of the Spirit, the ministry of God through the Church is greater for it is now no longer limited to Israel, the nation.¹¹⁴³ The contrast is thus not between Jesus and his disciples but "between Jesus with his disciples in the limited circumstances of his earthly ministry and the risen Christ with his disciples in the post-Easter situation".¹¹⁴⁴ In other words, the comparative "greater works" are to be understood when placed in an eschatological framework. In this regard, Barrett's comment is apposite, "their works are greater not because they themselves are greater but because Jesus' work is now complete".¹¹⁴⁵

The variety of options indicates the caution that needs to be exercised when considering the contemporary relevance of these verses. The least satisfactory explanation is that believers (or more believers) should be able to perform more sensational miracles than did Jesus. There is no evidence that the Church has ever functioned in this way in the past or the present. However, the references to the Spirit indicate that a new era has been established, as a result of which, the promise may be actualised in the context of the corporate Church. In that sense, Jesus' ministry of initiating the Kingdom has been complemented by the ministry of the Spirit through

¹¹⁴³ cf. Thompson, M.M., "Intercession in the Johannine Community: 1 John 5:16 in the context of the Gospel and Epistles of John", in Worship, Theology and Ministry in the Early Church, (eds.) Wilkins, M.J., Paige, T., Sheffield: JSOT (1992) 232; Lindars, John, 475; Dickinson, God does..., 39; Beasley-Murray, John, 255; Milne, John, 215; Carson, John, 496; Morris, John, 646.

¹¹⁴⁴ Beasley-Murray, John, 255.

¹¹⁴⁵ John, 460.

believers in achieving that growth, a theme developed elsewhere in the New Testament.

Elsewhere, references to Jesus' anticipation of the disciples' involvement in his supernatural ministry is limited. Although the text of John 9:4 is uncertain, most translations offer the plural "we must work the works of him who sent me". This probably refers to the disciples only,¹¹⁴⁶ though some have advocated a wider recipient base including the readers of the early Church community.¹¹⁴⁷

Conclusion

A number of reasons may therefore be adduced for questioning the assumption that the delegated authority by Jesus to the Twelve and the Seventy have been passed to all believers.

1. The commands to the Twelve and the Seventy relate to more than healing the sick; it is illegitimate and arbitrary to appropriate some of them but not all.
2. The dissimilarity in success between them and modern day believers is marked and inexplicable if both groups receive the same command and potential.

¹¹⁴⁶ cf. Schnackenburg, John, 2.241; Carson, John, 362; Brown, John, 1.372.

¹¹⁴⁷ cf. Barrett, John, 357; Nicol, The Semeia..., 119; Kysar, John, 149.

3. A contrast is to be drawn between Jesus sending out his followers to replicate his ministry in places to which he was not travelling and the Spirit's role in sending out believers with a different commission, given that the Kingdom has now been established.
4. If all believers were given the authority of Jesus to heal as he did, the Pauline charismatic gifts of healings and the Jacobean guidelines for a healing scenario lose their significance.
5. The era of the Spirit anticipates a different but complementary mission to that of Jesus in which although healing is a potential reality in the former, it forms a different purpose than in the mission and ministry of Jesus.

Jesus, the Spirit and Pentecost

It is with reference to the Spirit that a final issue needs to be resolved. As has been demonstrated earlier, many Pentecostals, Hagin and Wimber stress the significance of the relationship between the Spirit and Jesus. As a result, they conclude that the same dynamic of the Spirit is available to believers to emulate that which Jesus did in his ministry. This is promulgated by others also. Thus, Shelton stresses the dependency of Jesus on the Spirit to carry out his Messianic duty, following on from which he also deduces that believers, if they are similarly dependent on the Spirit, may function in similar power to Jesus.¹¹⁴⁸ MacNutt¹¹⁴⁹ suggests, "When the Spirit descended upon all Christians at Pentecost, it was to empower the entire Christian community to perform the works that Jesus did". This is similarly presented by Wagner¹¹⁵⁰ who deduces that Jesus chose to function as a man, not as a divine being, in his incarnation. He writes, "The power that worked in Jesus for his miraculous ministry not only related to the power available to us today; it is exactly the same".¹¹⁵¹

¹¹⁴⁸ Shelton, J.B., Mighty in Word and Deed. The Role of the Holy Spirit in Luke-Acts, Peabody:Hendrickson (1991) 59-61; cf. "A Reply to James D.G Dunn's 'Baptism in the Spirit; A Response to Pentecostal Scholarship on Luke-Acts'", JPT, 4 (1994) 139-143; Keener, C.S., The Spirit in the Gospels and Acts, Peabody:Hendrickson (1997) 70.

¹¹⁴⁹ The Prayer..., 27.

¹¹⁵⁰ "The Power of God and Your Power", CL, (July 1983) 42f.

¹¹⁵¹ ibid, 46; cf. Wagner, C.P., "Worldview Encounters", Power Encounters among Christians in the Western World, (ed.) Springer, K., San Francisco:Harper and Row (1988) 45; Brown, Israel's..., 411.

Stronstad¹¹⁵² develops this thesis by suggesting that the successors of Jesus carried his mission forward as a result of their experience at Pentecost which, he asserts, was equivalent to Jesus' experience at Jordan. This view assumes that the role of the Spirit is only vocational and for all believers.¹¹⁵³ Menzies also sees the empowering of Jesus as paradigmatic, writing, "Jesus (at the Jordan) like the early Church, was empowered to carry out his divinely appointed task".¹¹⁵⁴ Cerullo also contends, "Jesus never started His ministry until He was baptised in the Holy Spirit. Until then, He never confronted devils or demons or sickness".¹¹⁵⁵ Notwithstanding the lack of evidence for the latter statement and the contradiction to the former in Luke 2:46-52, the implication for believers is that they will be unable to follow in Christ's footsteps in terms of similar supernatural activities until a similar experience occurs in their lives. Simultaneously, it anticipates the possibility of believers emulating the ministry of Jesus, apparently empowered by the Holy Spirit as he was.

A number of comments need to be made.

¹¹⁵² Stronstad, R. "The Holy Spirit in Luke-Acts: A Synthesis of Luke's Pneumatology, Part 2", Paraclete, 23.2 (1989) 18ff; cf. The Charismatic Theology of St. Luke, Peabody:Hendrickson (1984) 52.

¹¹⁵³ cf. Stronstad, R., "Unity and Diversity: New Testament Perspectives on the Holy Spirit", Paraclete, 23. 3 (1989) 15-28; "The prophethood of all believers: A Study in Luke's Charismatic Theology", Pentecostalism in Context. Essays in Honour of William W. Menzies, (eds.) Ma, W., Menzies, R.P., Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press (1997) 68.

¹¹⁵⁴ Menzies, R.P., Empowered for Witness: The Spirit in Luke-Acts, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press (1994) 142, 157, 212, 246; cf. Arrington, F.L., The Acts of the Apostles, Peabody:Hendrickson (1988) 19; Lederle, I.H., Treasures Old and New: Interpretations of 'Spirit-Baptism' in the Charismatic Renewal Movement, Peabody:Hendrickson (1988) 57; Hawthorne, G.F., The Presence and the Power, Dallas:Word (1991) 227-244.

¹¹⁵⁵ Cerullo, M., "What does it mean to preach the Gospel?", VML (Feb. 1995) 13.

1. Many have rightly commented on the empowering role of the Spirit for the purposes of achieving his Messianic task,¹¹⁵⁶ as do Jesus (Lk. 4:18f) and Peter (Acts 10:37f). However, it has been overstressed to the exclusion of other characteristics of the role of the Spirit.¹¹⁵⁷ At the same time, the purpose of that power has been debated. Schweizer¹¹⁵⁸ regards it as power for authoritative preaching while Menzies understands in the context of the provision of power for prophetic witness and not for miracles.¹¹⁵⁹ Although his thesis has received criticism, to which he has responded,¹¹⁶⁰ he does provide a helpful corrective to a hasty assessment of the role of the Spirit in the life of

¹¹⁵⁶ cf. Dunn, J.D.G., Baptism in the Holy Spirit: A Re-examination of the New Testament Teaching on the Gift of the Spirit in relation to Pentecostalism Today, London:SCM (1970) 28f; Jeremias, J., New Testament Theology: The Proclamation of Jesus, London:SCM (1972) 52; Wolff, H.W., Joel and Amos, Philadelphia:Fortress Press (1977) 766; Hill, D., New Testament Prophecy, London:MMS (1979) 48; Menzies, Empowered..., 152ff; Shelton, Mighty..., 161; 110f; Aker, B., "New Directions in Lucan Theology: Reflections on Luke 3:21-22 and some implications", Faces of Renewal: Studies in Honor of Stanley M. Horton, (ed.) Elbert, P., Peabody:Hendricksen (1988) 110f; Turner, M., "The Spirit of Christ and Christology", Christ the Lord, 168-190; "The Spirit of Prophecy and the Power of Authoritative Preaching in Luke-Acts. A Question of Origins", NTS, 38 (1992) 72-76; Keener, The Spirit..., Peabody:Hendrickson (1997) 190; Stronstad, The Charismatic..., ch. 5; Petts, D., "The Baptism in the Holy Spirit: The Theological Distinctive", Pentecostal Perspectives, (ed.) Warrington, K., Carlisle:Paternoster Press (1998) 109f, 113.

¹¹⁵⁷ Soteriological functions have been discussed elsewhere (Webb, R.L., John the Baptizer and Prophet: A Socio-Historical Study, Sheffield:JSOT Press (1991) 96; Turner, Power..., 108; Dunn, Baptism..., 8ff).

¹¹⁵⁸ Schweizer, E., "pneuma", TDNT, 6.404ff.

¹¹⁵⁹ Menzies, R.P., The Development of Early Christian Pneumatology, Sheffield:Sheffield Academic Press (1991) 161-177, 258ff; cf. Stronstad, The Charismatic..., 64f; Penney, J.M., The Missionary Emphasis of Lukan Pneumatology, Sheffield:Sheffield Academic Press (1997) 86; Schweizer, "pneuma", 6.409.

¹¹⁶⁰ Menzies, R.P., "Spirit and Power in Luke-Acts: A Response to Max Turner", JSNT, 49 (1993) 46-55; "Luke and the Spirit: A Reply to James Dunn", JPT, 4 (1994) 115-138.

Jesus, and thereafter the believer, that restricts significance to empowerment for miracles, particularly healing miracles.¹¹⁶¹ Turner prefers to understand the power as being for the purpose of experiencing sonship as well as for empowering, including the miraculous.¹¹⁶²

2. The material relating to the Spirit in the Gospels is relatively small.¹¹⁶³ Although many hypotheses have been offered for the significance of this feature,¹¹⁶⁴ a major implication of this limited attestation to the Spirit is that dependency by Jesus on the Spirit is less clearly articulated than has been assumed by some. This is especially significant in Luke where the pneumatological emphasis is most pronounced.

However, the Spirit is prominent when Jesus is absent, as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles; the presence of Jesus in the Gospels anticipates an immediacy of the Godhead in Jesus and a direct revelation of God to mankind. The Spirit enters into a mediatorial role only when Jesus is absent. The Gospels are concerned foremost with the presentation of Jesus as the unique Christ who will himself confer

¹¹⁶¹ as Arrington, Acts, 19.

¹¹⁶² Turner, M., "Empowerment for Mission", VoxE, 24 (1994) 113; Power..., 91, 122ff; "The Spirit of Christ and Christology", Christ the Lord, (ed.) Rowdon, 168-190; "The Spirit and the Power of Jesus' Miracles in the Lucan Conception", NovT, 33 (1991) 124-152.

¹¹⁶³ cf. Barrett, C.K., The Holy Spirit and the Gospel Tradition, London: SPCK (1947) 115; Schweizer, E., "pneuma", TDNT, 6.420.

¹¹⁶⁴ Buckwalter, H.D., The Character and Purpose of Luke's Christology, Cambridge: CUP (1996) 121f.

the Spirit (Mt. 3:11; Mk. 1:8; Lk. 3:16), a responsibility afforded to Yahweh in the Old Testament.¹¹⁶⁵ Cosgrove¹¹⁶⁶ articulates the view that Jesus was in clear control of his destiny, such was his divine authority. Rather than the Spirit supporting Jesus, Jesus is viewed as being the Lord of the Spirit. The presence of the Spirit at Pentecost is proof that the promise of Jesus concerning the Spirit is valid (Lk. 24:49; Acts 1:4f) and that Jesus is the divine Lord of the Spirit.¹¹⁶⁷

3. It should not be assumed that a Spirit-empowered Jesus represents a paradigmatic model for the Church. The role of Jesus was unique as Messiah and any empowering by the Spirit was dedicated to the achievement of those specific Messianic duties. Although the Spirit functions in the lives of the disciples, it is for a different purpose to that of the mission of Jesus. Also, a number of features of the Jordan narrative are absent from the Pentecost pericope. Thus, Turner writes, "Jesus' experience at Jordan (as) a unique Messianic anointing (was) without a clearly intended parallel in the disciples' experience".¹¹⁶⁸ Indeed, he writes, "The point of the parallels between Jesus' ministry in the Spirit and what takes place in Acts is not that the Church has inherited Jesus' anointing but that the risen Lord himself continues his redemptive activity, as Lord of the Spirit, through the charismata he

¹¹⁶⁵ Gen. 6:3; Num. 11:29; Is. 42:1, 63:11; Joel 2:28ff.

¹¹⁶⁶ Cosgrove, C.H., "The Divine 'dei' in Luke-Acts; Investigation into the Lucan understanding of God's Providence", *NovT*, 26 (1984) 168-190.

¹¹⁶⁷ Buckwalter, *The Character...*, 193-205; Turner, "The Spirit of Christ...", 179-181; "Jesus and the Spirit", 36-40.

¹¹⁶⁸ Turner, M., "Jesus and the Spirit in Lucan perspective", *TB* 32 (1981) 40.

bestows in his Church".¹¹⁶⁹ It is thus more appropriate to view the experience at Pentecost as analogous, rather than identical or paralleled to the Jordan experience of Jesus.¹¹⁷⁰

Dunn concludes that the Spirit in Jesus at the Jordan operates in an initiatory capacity, indicating his "entry into...and experience of sonship".¹¹⁷¹ With this interpretation, the Spirit's presence in Jesus may also not be viewed as a paradigm for believers, for Jesus' experience at the Jordan was a unique moment in history, "the beginning of a new epoch in salvation history".¹¹⁷² If there is a parallel at Pentecost, it would be that the Spirit initiated the disciples into the Church and into their new experience of sonship rather than specifically empowering them for service.¹¹⁷³ Although his presentation has been critiqued¹¹⁷⁴, Dunn does provide a helpful corrective to the view that the Spirit's involvement in

¹¹⁶⁹ *ibid*, 28f.

¹¹⁷⁰ cf. Green, *Luke*, 186.

¹¹⁷¹ Dunn, *Baptism...*, 23-32, 47f.

¹¹⁷² *ibid*, 24, 46f; "Baptism in the Spirit: A Response to Pentecostal Scholarship on Luke-Acts", *JPT*, 4 (1994) 3-27.

¹¹⁷³ *ibid*, 90-102; Dunn, J. D.G., *The Acts of the Apostles*, Peterborough:Epworth (1996) 107.

¹¹⁷⁴ Menzies, R.P., "Luke and the Spirit: A Reply to James Dunn", *JPT*, 4 (1994) 115-138; *The Development...*, 31-34; Atkinson, W.P., "Pentecostal Responses to Dunn's 'Baptism in the Spirit': Luke-Acts", *JPT*, 6 (1995) 87-131; "Pentecostal Responses to Dunn's 'Baptism in the Spirit': Pauline literature", *JPT*, 7 (1995) 49-72; Stronstad, *The Charismatic...*, 9ff, 51ff; "Unity...", 16ff; Turner, M., "Luke and the Spirit: Studies in the Significance of Receiving the Spirit in Luke-Acts", unpubl. Ph.D., Cambridge University (1980) 28; Petts, D., "The Baptism in the Holy Spirit in relation to Christian Initiation", unpubl. M.Th. dissertation, Nottingham University (1987) 50f, 61ff, 83ff; Ervin, H., *Conversion-Initiation and the Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, Peabody:Hendrickson (1984) 5, 10, 19f, 25ff; Shelton, "A Reply to...", 139-143.

the believer (and Jesus) was to empower them only for miraculous activity.

4. A less traversed line of enquiry may here be commented on as it has a bearing on the discussion. The significance of the Spirit in the life of Jesus is to affirm him as well as to empower him. Jesus is identified and affirmed as the harbinger of the Kingdom of God by the Spirit.¹¹⁷⁵

Luke 1:35 describes the Spirit as overshadowing Jesus in the womb, the motif of “presence” rather than “power” being of significance. Insofar as this is the first reference of the Spirit to Jesus, its significance is not to be overlooked.¹¹⁷⁶ At the Jordan, Matthew (3:16f) does not record that anyone but Jesus saw or heard the supernatural events that occurred (though the words of the Father in the third person may suggest other listeners than Jesus).¹¹⁷⁷ Mark (1:9-11) and Luke (3:20f) specifically record the experience as a personal encounter between Jesus and the Father. John (1:32) records that the Baptist saw the Spirit descending. However, the context is significant. At the time, he did not know the identity of the Messiah (1:33); the revelation of the descent of the Spirit was the means of divine confirmation to John of the identity of the Son

¹¹⁷⁵ cf. Keener, The Spirit..., 60.

¹¹⁷⁶ Turner (Power..., 161) describes it as “an interpretational gateway to Luke’s pneumatology”.

¹¹⁷⁷ Kingsbury (Matthew, 14) believes the crowd did not hear the voice; cf. Hill, New..., 59; Cranfield, C.E.B., “The Baptism of our Lord—a Study of St Mark 1:9-11”, SJT, 8 (1955) 53-63; Borg, M., Jesus, a New Vision, San Francisco:Harper and Row (1987) 41ff.

of God (1:33). The significance of the presence of the Spirit was thus confirmation/affirmation of the identity of the Messiah. The Synoptics maintain the description of a vision received by Jesus rather than an objective reception.

Nevertheless, the Synoptists, although presenting the encounter as personal between Jesus and the Father, still recorded each of the supernatural events for the benefit of the readers. The purpose for this is not stated. However, given the affirmatory aspects of the events occurring at the baptism of Jesus and John's recorded reason of identification, it appears that they desired their readers to recognise that Jesus was being personally affirmed by God and identified as the Son of God and the giver of the Spirit (1:33). In the Old Testament, the Spirit functions as an identity marker (Ex. 33:15f; Is. 63:9-14), Fee¹¹⁷⁸ describing the Spirit as "God's presence".¹¹⁷⁹ The occasion primarily functioned as an affirmation of Jesus and a confirmation of his Messianic role, any empowering being supplementary. Green¹¹⁸⁰ describes it thus as "an unimpeachable sanction of Jesus with regard to his identity and mission...divine affirmation...as God's agent of redemption". If a parallel is to be drawn with the reception of the Spirit by the disciples at Jerusalem, it is that they also were confirmed in the role that Jesus had prepared for them, namely that they be his

¹¹⁷⁸ Fee, G., God's Empowering Presence, Peabody:Hendrickson (1995) 8.

¹¹⁷⁹ see Menzies, The Development..., 92-96, 104-108.

¹¹⁸⁰ Luke, 2187.

witnesses (Acts 1:8). The presence of the Spirit in them was divine confirmation of this as well as providing them with the power of Jesus, mediated by the Spirit to them.

Marshall comments on the statement, “you are my son”, concluding that this is “a declaration of an existing status, not the conferral of a new dignity”.¹¹⁸¹ At the Jordan, the words of the Father act as an affirmation of Jesus as he commences his mission proper, the presence of the Spirit acting as a powerful symbol of his heavenly origin and relationship. The allusions to Psalm 2:7, a royal psalm relating to the Son and heir, and Isaiah 42:1, with its relation to the Servant, are powerful affirmations of Jesus. Jesus, at the Jordan, is thus legitimised by the Spirit. Though he may also be empowered by him, he is certainly endorsed by him.¹¹⁸² Similarly, Bock writes, “The Spirit leads and confirms more than he empowers Jesus”.¹¹⁸³ It is preferable therefore to recognise the significant affirming nature of the Spirit in relation to Jesus. The redactional treatment by Luke that results in the statement, “he was led in the Spirit” does not necessarily indicate an infusion of charismatic wisdom¹¹⁸⁴ but charismatic affirmation. He is

¹¹⁸¹ Luke, 155.

¹¹⁸² cf. 1 Tim. 3:16.

¹¹⁸³ Bock, D.L., Luke 1:1-9:50, Grand Rapids:Baker (1994) 345.

¹¹⁸⁴ cf. Turner’s (The Holy..., 29) suggestion that the Spirit provided Jesus with “new depths of charismatic wisdom and insight” is not specified in the text and the lack of reference to the Spirit's empowering Jesus in the wilderness is apposite.

Messiah precisely because the Spirit is leading him, rather than that he needs the Spirit in order to function as Messiah.

In the temptations of Jesus that follow, it is Jesus' use of Scripture, not the Spirit that enables Jesus to overcome the Devil. Although many support the latter view,¹¹⁸⁵ it is improbable and not supported by the text.¹¹⁸⁶ Jesus' commitment to his messianic mission affirms him as the appropriate one in whom the Spirit will reside. (Similarly, Luke informs his readers (Acts 5:32) that the obedient are those who are to be the recipients of the Spirit (v. 29), as demonstrated in the willingness of Jesus to obey the Father.¹¹⁸⁷) The Spirit does not help him to obey; his obedience indicates his ongoing relationship with the Father and the Spirit. Indeed, Luke (4:12) records Jesus warning the Devil, "You shall not tempt the Lord your God". His temptations were not directed to a prophet, inspired and empowered by the Spirit, but to one who could own the name of God as his own. France accurately describes Jesus' ministry as a demonstration of "an assumption of a divine role" on his part.¹¹⁸⁸

¹¹⁸⁵ Fitzmyer, Luke 1, 513; Turner, "Luke and the Spirit...", 84f; Beasley-Murray, G.R., Baptism in the New Testament, Exeter: Paternoster Press (1962) 71.

¹¹⁸⁶ cf Menzies, The Development..., 160

¹¹⁸⁷ see also OT writers (1 Sam. 10:6, 10; 11:6; 16:14) who described the Spirit leaving those who were unworthy of his presence.

¹¹⁸⁸ France, R.T., "The Worship of Jesus", Christ the Lord, (ed.) Rowdon, 19.

Jesus is the unique "divine man" though not in the outmoded Hellenistic form promulgated by, amongst others, Bultmann¹¹⁸⁹ and Koester.¹¹⁹⁰ Bruner¹¹⁹¹ argues, "It is not the Spirit who is 'God Inside Out', it is the Son". He further writes, "The one great outside of the Holy Trinity is Jesus of Nazareth". This is not to undermine or underestimate the role or person of the Spirit but to accurately estimate the role and person of Jesus.

Similarly, although Turner¹¹⁹² concludes that Matthew 12:28 "explicitly attributes Jesus' exorcisms to his empowering with the Spirit", it is more a claim to divinity or divine power than a reference to charismatic enduement. Turner¹¹⁹³ himself recognises that the term "the Spirit of God" is used synonymously with God and given that nowhere in Jewish sources is the Spirit directly connected with exorcisms, it is more probable that Jesus is claiming divinity not dependency on the Spirit. Luke's redaction in attributing exorcisms to "the finger of God" instead of the Spirit makes clear that which is implicit (Luke 11:20).

¹¹⁸⁹ John, 138, 202f, 306.

¹¹⁹⁰ Koester, H., Einführung in das Neue Testament im Rahmen der Religionsgeschichte und Kulturgeschichte der Hellenistischen und Römischen Zeit, New York: de Gruyter (1980) 605-612, 753-755; this theory has been critiqued most recently by Koskeniemi (E., "Apollonius of Tyana: A Typical Theios Aner"?, JBL, 117.3 (1998) 455-467.

¹¹⁹¹ Bruner, F.D., "The *Son* is God Inside Out: A Response to Stephen B. Bevans S.V.D.", IBMR, 22.3 (July 1998) 108.

¹¹⁹² The Holy..., 30.

¹¹⁹³ ibid, 2f.

It is in this light that Luke 4:18, where Jesus is described as being anointed for his Messianic mission, is to be analysed. Luke 4:16-30 records the sermon preached by Jesus in Nazareth at the commencement of his ministry, immediately after the Temptations.¹¹⁹⁴ Buckwalter,¹¹⁹⁵ in particular, identifies in Luke a portrayal of the exalted Jesus as God's co-equal as demonstrated by his activity, particularly in relationship to the Spirit. He begins the reading from Isaiah 61:1f with the words, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me". It is to be noted that only Luke describes Jesus as being anointed.¹¹⁹⁶ He never uses the term of believers.¹¹⁹⁷ The passage following relates to the foretold messianic mission. Jesus functions as a prophet declaring good news and identifying himself as the one who will bring it about (4:24). It has been suggested that the role of the Spirit is to enable Jesus to achieve the latter.¹¹⁹⁸ Although this may be a possibility, it is appropriate to consider an adjunctive reason that would also help understand why Luke has moved the Nazareth pericope forward in his chronology. The role of the Spirit is to affirm Jesus as a prophet before any prophetic ministry is achieved. Power, be it in miracles or proclamation, is not the focus of the pericope; it is the identification and affirmation of the prophet that is most important. Similarly, the sermon provides the possibility for the affirmation or rejection of Jesus by the listeners.

¹¹⁹⁴ in contrast to Matthew (13:53-58) and Mark (6:1-6).

¹¹⁹⁵ The Character..., 128-135, 193- 204, 275-284.

¹¹⁹⁶ Lk. 4:18; Acts 4:27; 10:38; cf. Heb. 1:9.

¹¹⁹⁷ Only Paul does and only once in 2 Cor. 1:25.

¹¹⁹⁸ cf. Turner, Power..., 226f; Menzies, Development..., 173

Although there is initial appreciation, it soon turns into outright rebuttal and physical expulsion from the synagogue and the city, culminating in an attempt to murder him. Psalm 118:22 has been fulfilled in the rejection of Jesus by his people but also in his vindication and affirmation by God through the presence of the Spirit. In particular, Jesus is presented as having a unique ministry in which the content of the prophecy is to be understood, not only as a demonstration and proof of his person and his power but as a declaration of acts of freedom that are integral to the salvation that he has come to achieve. They affirm the message of which they are a part while the Spirit affirms him, the messenger.¹¹⁹⁹

The recognition that a significant purpose of the involvement of the Spirit in the life of Jesus was in affirming him in his Messianic mission and in his relationship with God is important as it distances the role of the Spirit from an exclusive link with his miraculous activity. Turner¹²⁰⁰ appositely comments, "The clear emphasis on the Spirit as the Messiah's endowment should also warn us against too quickly assuming Luke presents Jesus as a pattern for all other Christians' experience of the Spirit". The uniqueness of that endowment indicates a unique mission; the uniqueness of his mission presupposes a unique endowment.¹²⁰¹

¹¹⁹⁹ cf. Turner, The Holy..., 249.

¹²⁰⁰ The Holy Spirit..., 35.

¹²⁰¹ Turner (M., "Baptism with Holy Spirit - part 2: Luke's witness then and now", paper presented at the EPTA Conference (July 1998)) identifies Jesus' Jordan

Jesus is not recorded as healing as a result of the power of the Spirit. Menzies¹²⁰² is wrong to deduce that Luke deliberately distances healings from the work of the Spirit because the latter is related to prophecy. Nevertheless, notwithstanding Turner's¹²⁰³ critique of his position, the absence of a reference to the Spirit in the context of the healings of Jesus merits brief attention. The impression of the Gospels is that Jesus heals as part of his Messianic mission; the healings substantiate his person and his status. The purpose of the Spirit is to formalise the role of Jesus not exclusively to facilitate his supernatural ministry. To stress the influence of the Spirit at the expense of a recognition of the unique status of Jesus is thus inappropriate in this pedagogical framework. This is reflected in the practice of the early Church which functioned in healings in the context of the name of Jesus, not the Spirit. The healings of Jesus demonstrated his messiahship (Matt. 11:2ff//s), are aspects of the Kingdom (Matt. 10:7f), indicate his unique status (Luke 7:11ff), and prove his sovereign rule over his destiny (Luke 13:32f); they do not demonstrate that without the Spirit he was powerless nor indicate that as the Spirit impacted him with supernatural energy, so the same is available for all believers.

If there is to be any parallel between Jesus' experience of the Spirit at the Jordan and the experience of the disciples at Pentecost, it is in the

experience as "a Messianic outpouring" and a "unique Messianic act" during which he received a "public attestation".

¹²⁰² Menzies, *The Development...*, 124-126.

¹²⁰³ "The Spirit...", 129-142.

context of their affirmation as new and commissioned members of the Church by the Spirit. The gift of tongues and the motif of fire serve to set them apart and identify them as those who are appropriate recipients of the promise of Joel 2:28-32. In this respect, a paradigm may be anticipated in the experience of Jesus and the Spirit at the Jordan.

The Spirit is seen to function in the lives of the believers of the early Church in similar fashion; thus, he affirms Stephen during his martyrdom by providing a vision of his destiny, heaven¹²⁰⁴ and he affirms the salvation of Saul.¹²⁰⁵ Similarly, the Gentile household of Cornelius are affirmed as valid members of the Church by the Spirit (Acts 10:44-48), confirmed by Acts 11:1ff, 13-18, there being no mention of prophetic, miraculous or proclamatory activity on the part of the new believers as a result of the presence of the Spirit. He has come to affirm them when others may be unwilling so to do. If the purpose of the record of Jesus at the Jordan is not specifically to demonstrate his being empowered, a parallel empowering for believers at Pentecost is to be questioned.

Although the motif of power is present in the experience of Jesus with the Spirit at the Jordan, and at Pentecost for the disciples, it need not be the only or the main motif. Although power is a constant in the lives

¹²⁰⁴

Acts 7:55

¹²⁰⁵

Acts 9:17f; cf. Guthrie, D., New Testament Theology, Leicester:IVP (1981) 543; Dunn, Baptism..., 73ff.

of Jesus and the disciples, the commissions to be completed as a result of that power are significantly different and any paradigm is to be carefully clarified. Unless it is clear that his authority has been delegated to all believers, it is inappropriate to assume such a possibility. Jesus' healing ministry was related to the establishment of the Kingdom; contemporary healings demonstrate dissimilarities with those of Jesus.

Conclusion

If Jesus meant to be emulated, it is to be wondered why a framework for healing has not been recorded for posterity as that contained in James 5: 14-16. The absence of such suggests that a dissimilarity was anticipated. Although Dibelius¹²⁰⁶ states, "almost without exception are the miracles of healing performed with the aid of a miracle-working formula", the limited evidence in the Synoptics for any set methodology on the part of Jesus suggests that he is not working to guidelines nor is it his purpose to teach any methodology to his followers.¹²⁰⁷ Smail therefore more accurately maintains a distinction to be kept between Jesus and the believer and the potential available to each. Thus, he states, "For Jesus, the Holy Spirit was reflected in his Messianic person; for us, the Holy Spirit is in our Pentecostal context of

¹²⁰⁶ From Tradition..., 83.

¹²⁰⁷ cf. Theissen, Miracle..., 91; Evans, E. "The Significance of the New Testament healing miracles for modern health", Religion..., (ed.) Crowlesmith, 83; Smail (63), Walker (105), Charismatic...

firstfruits”.¹²⁰⁸ It is instructive to note that when Jesus confronted “ἄσθενεια”,¹²⁰⁹ his power dispelled it; where Paul confronted it (2 Cor. 12:9f), Christ’s power is perfected through it, though the “ἄσθενεια” remains. A different context and dimension calls for a different manifestation of the power available.

¹²⁰⁸ “A Quest...”.

¹²⁰⁹ egs. Matt. 10:8; 25:39, 43, 44; Mk. 6:56; Lk. 4:40; 5:15; 8:2; Jn. 4:46; 5:3, 5, 7.

AN ASSESSMENT OF JESUS AS A

PARADIGMATIC OR PEDAGOGICAL MODEL

The above research has initially examined the views of individuals and denominations who represent those who espouse the view that Jesus in his healing ministry acted as a model for believers to emulate. In order to prove this, a number of varied premises are offered, the two constant ones being that Jesus delegated his power to believers, promising that they would be able to imitate him, and that Jesus depended on the Holy Spirit in a similar fashion to believers. Thus, it is assumed that the healing success of Jesus may be maintained, believers functioning as people endowed with the identical power of the Spirit as reflected in Jesus.

Because of the limited success rate of contemporary healing ministries as contrasted to the healing mission of Jesus, a number of caveats have been offered to help explain the discontinuity between the model and those attempting to reflect it, even though their very presence is sufficient to question the alleged continuity of power and praxis. In particular, it has been demonstrated that their belief structures demonstrate a relationship with the Jacobean guidelines, as distinct from Jesus' praxis, although none of those involved interact with James 5:14ff to a significant degree, attempting to prove their views instead on the basis of the ministry of Jesus.

The attempts to provide comprehensive lists of reasons for healing not occurring even though prayer is offered demonstrates, by way of contrast, the major differences between the healing ministry of Jesus and contemporary healers.¹²¹⁰ At the same time, the unique nature of Jesus' person and ministry is seriously undermined in an attempt to define a parallel relationship between his life and those of believers.

It is also vital to consider the particular purposes of the miracles of Jesus and the uniqueness of his person and mission. The presentation of Jesus' incarnation by the Synoptists, and especially John, is that it is "thoroughly unique, unprecedented and unrepeatable".¹²¹¹ As Schweizer¹²¹² confirms, it is Jesus who is "the parable of God". Alternative conclusions lead to vain and, ultimately, unhelpful attempts to explain the poor reflection of Jesus' ministry in the lives of believers instead of rejoicing in that which the Spirit is achieving in fulfilment of his agenda in the development of the Church. Although healings occur in the contemporary Church, they are of a different nature to those in the ministry of Jesus. Rather than attempt to combine and compare the two, it is more appropriate to recognise their distinctives.

¹²¹⁰ For examples of the latter see, Pearson, Christian..., 48-72; Huggett, Healing..., 25-38; MacNutt, Healing, 78f, 86, 169, 171-177, 249- 256; "The Mystery...", 11; The Power..., 147-157, 165-169 (reasons include lack of faith, lack of specific prayer, sin, faulty diagnosis, another person is meant to bring the healing, the timing is not right).

¹²¹¹ Kostenberger, The Missions..., 216.

¹²¹² Schweizer, E., Jesus the Parable of God, Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark (1997).

An adjunctive perspective would acknowledge that believers are functioning in a fallen world in a context where aspects of life are, in the sovereignty of God, providing opportunities for spiritual growth without the external circumstances being altered. Smail¹²¹³ thus notes, "suffering is the very stuff out of which He develops glory". Similarly, Wright¹²¹⁴ suggests, "To accept it (sickness) as part of the disorder of nature in a world resistant to God...may be a dignifying and liberating experience".

Although biblical principles may indeed be applied to contemporary Christian healing, it is inadvisable to assume that contemporary Christians have been authorised to function in healing as did Jesus. Although the ministry of healing, engaged in by Jesus, continued in later generations, he only specifically commissioned his disciples to follow his pattern. It is to the additional and alternative teaching of Paul and especially James concerning healing that the Church is to look for guidelines in healing praxis. Dickinson¹²¹⁵ accurately comments, "While modern faith-healing practice in its various forms can be said to be derived from Scripture texts and concepts, it cannot be legitimately be said to be reproducing either the methods or the effects of the healing works of Christ and the Apostles".

After examining the some of the views of the proponents of the belief that the Church is called to imitate the healing ministry of Jesus, this thesis addressed

¹²¹³ "A Quest...".

¹²¹⁴ Charismatic..., (Smail et al) 75.

¹²¹⁵ God does..., 294.

the Gospels in order to assess the motivation of the writers who recorded healing stories. The resultant comments on the Gospels, to recapitulate that which was stated earlier, have determined that the evidence of the healing accounts in the Gospels demonstrate that the motive of Jesus in effecting healing comprised two main aspects namely, teaching relating to himself (concerning his person and mission) and to the attitude of his followers (particularly related to the issues of faith and obedience). As such, they are to be recognised as having an integrally important pedagogical function. These issues are to be borne in mind especially when considering the beliefs of those who claim to operate a healing ministry based on the teaching and praxis of Jesus. Although no suggestion has been made that Classical Pentecostals, Kenneth Hagin and John Wimber engaged in chicanery, there is a tendency to claim more than reality affirms. Their success rate, interpretations of faith, use of the name of Jesus and emphasis on the significance of sin and Satan with regard to sickness find less harmony with the healing ministry of Jesus. The reasons for assuming that they have been called and empowered to emulate his healing ministry have also been shown to be severely flawed. Unless the healings function as acted parables, as in Jesus' ministry, it is to be questioned as to whether they can be described as emulating him. Rather than assuming a direct line between Jesus' practice and contemporary healing, the uniqueness of his ministry is to be recognised and affirmed. Rather than Jesus be viewed as an healing archetype, the evidence indicates his healing ministry was unique.

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